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There is yet room for vision, 1952.

"THERE IS YET ROOM FOR VISION"

BACCALAUREATE ADDRESS AT GRADUATION AND ORDINATION EXERCISES
HEBREW UNION COLLEGE, CINCINNATI, OHIO
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Shortly before his death, Judah Hanasi summoned his elder son, Gamaliel, who was to succeed him in the patriarchate and said to him; "Conduct your office with greatness. There is a difference of opinion among scholars as to the meaning of the word . Some would read - "with men of high standing". The Aruch reads it as "something precious and of great value. The first interpretation appeals to me most. "Conduct your office with greatness.

Judah Hanasi was a very humble man although he occupied the most exalted office among his people. The Rabbis declared; "With the death of Rabbi, humility passed away." His advice to his son, therefore, could not be taken to mean; "be haughty and of a lofty bearing, maintain a domineering attitude towards your fellowmen." It was greatness of another sort that he undoubtedly had in mind; spiritual stateliness, a mood of authority which derives from sure confidence in one's status, one's mandate, one's mission and one's future. He spoke of a high courage with which one, especially a leader, should face all the evil and all the evil-doers of the world, knowing that in the end, goodness will prevail. This quality of greatness was always dear to the heart of our people. They preferred to associate it with their teachers, their leaders and their prophets. As a symbol of his newly-acquired high estate and eminence, it was the practice in Rabbinic times to spread a cloak of gold over the ordained at the ceremony of his ordination.

It is of such greatness that I would like to speak to you today, on the day of your ordination; for ours is a time for greatness, and the need is for great men.

Recently, I had occasion to address the American College of Physicians on the subject, "American Leadership in the World Today". I expressed the thought that this age in which we live is a great age, one of the greatest in human history. We are too near our times properly to appraise them. One requires distance in order to see great

objects in their proper perspective. We ourselves are too much involved in the turmoil, the fears, and the conflicts of our day to see objectively the amazing new pattern of life which is emerging.

Many people are quick to describe our age as materialistic, as lacking in idealism, in aim and purpose, and as drifting helplessly to disaster.

A mood of crisis is abroad in our world and there is fear in the hearts of men. Men talk of economic collapse, of a third world war, of an irrepressible conflict between the East and the West which will completely shatter our civilization. There is much violence in our day, all the unleashed mendacities and vituperations of a cold war.

. It is not only in Messianic times that arrogance and brutality increase, but in all times of upheaval and social convulsion.

There are very few people who see this age of ours as a great age. I am persuaded that it is a truly great age. Historic events, great in amplitude and consequence, are coming to pass in our day. I am not thinking at the moment of the new worlds which science is continually disclosing, the new insights into the nature of matter and energy, the new sources of power and wealth, the new methods of production, distribution, transportation and communication. I am not referring to the amazing progress in the medical sciences which has so markedly improved the health of the human race and increased the average length of life, nor to the marvels of engineering and the miracles of construction.

In characterizing our age as great, I am thinking in terms of social progress and welfare, in terms of human advancement and civilization. More is being done in our day for the improvement of the conditions of the common man, for the raising of his standard of living, his health, his education, and for his protection against the disabilities of sickness, unemployment and old age, than in any generation, than in any five generations in the past. Never were more determined efforts being made to bring about a fairer sharing of the wealth that is produced and a better way of life for all.

Never have the submerged races and peoples of the earth risen as they have risen in our day to demand and to achieve, as they have to a large measure achieved, freedom and self-determination. Within the last six years one-fourth of the earth's population - more than five hundred million non-self-governing people - have obtained their political freedom. Imperialism and colonialism are in their death-throes. Backward peoples are pressing forward into the light of a new day, and the exploitation of the dark races of the earth is rapidly drawing to a close.

What we are witnessing in our day, if we have eyes not only to see things but to see into the heart of things, is not social disintegration, but a radical new re-integration of humanity, a profound change in the social evolution of man, a change not free, of course, from dangers - for there is no progress without danger - but one of boundless and immeasurable potentialities. We are witnessing one of those sharp, decisive turns in the road of human progress comparable to the catastrophic metamorphoses observable in nature as in the case, for example, of the caterpillar, which at a certain stage, is transformed into the chrysalis and the chrysalis into the butterfly.

I do not wish to overdraw the picture. I am not suggesting that our age is approaching idyllic perfection, or that the millenium is just around the corner. There is not a spot on the face of the globe today where vast social wrongs and injustices do not exist, and where the masses of mankind are not, to a greater or lesser degree, still underprivileged and disadvantaged. There is no country on earth which is altogether free from class conflict, from bigotry, intolerance, slums and privation. It will take centuries, not decades or generations, before all the peoples of the world will possess even that measure of well-being, far from the optimum, which some of the most favored peoples of the world already possess.

The important thing to consider, ~~however~~, is not whether we are on the eve of the millenium, but whether the major trends of our age are in the direction of the hoped-for good society, or away from it. Is our age breaking chains, or not? Is it trying to eradicate poverty and illiteracy and to raise the standard of living of ~~all~~ people, regardless of race or color or creed? Is it trying to satisfy the legitimate aspirations of peoples to national freedom and independence? Is it trying to organize the world for peace and for international cooperation? I believe that in all these major trends, our age has given welcome evidence of great determination and of considerable progress. It is moving purposefully in the right direction - the abolition of war, the reduction of poverty, and the elimination of racial inequality. These are the three major trends of our century, and they are the major trends both in the East and the West, in the Communist as well as in the non-Communist world. What is tearing these worlds apart is a difference not of ideology or objective, but of method.

In the solution of the problems of this great, but greatly troubled age of ours, Judaism has a vital role to play, ~~for~~ ^{and} it is the ideals of Judaism which are really at stake in the struggle today, ~~as well as~~ Judaism's method for human progress. The importance of the individual, his unalienable rights, freedom, democracy, equality, brotherhood, peace - what are they but the offspring of Judaism, reared and ~~brought~~ ^{nurtured} ~~up~~ by it. And what method is available to mankind to replace the bitter methods of violence, suppression and terror, which have led to such mounting disasters in our generation, other than the method which Judaism proposed ^{long ago}, the method of inner reformation, ~~of Teshubah - repentance~~ the inner revolution of compassion and reconciliation - a method which has never been fully tried in the world and which today is being ignored more thoroughly than at any time in human history.

Judaism has the true spirit with which to confront this upreaching age of ours, wild with spiritual confusion; for it has unswerving faith in man, in mankind and in human progress. In this regard Judaism is quite unique among the religions of mankind - as unique as were its God-concept, its prophets, its synagogue and its prayer worship. With the possible exception of Zoroastrianism, faith in man and in human progress is not present, commandingly, if at all, in Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Christianity or Islam. Indeed, belief in human progress belongs only to a very small portion of the human race. The predominant mood of most historic religions is pessimism. Most religious philosophies from ancient Gnosticism, Stoicism and Cynicism to modern Existentialism are grounded in deep pessimism and disillusionment. Man is hopelessly trapped and cannot escape the predicament of his own existence. He cannot hope to solve the entangled ethical paradoxes of his life. ~~He cannot help himself. He needs redemption and a redeemer.~~ The world is not a good place to live in. It is evil. No real happiness is possible in it. The good society cannot be established on earth. Man is lost in original sin or homeless in an infinite and im-
 He cannot help himself. He needs redemption and a redeemer. personal universe. ~~Man must be saved and his~~ salvation can be achieved, not by merit or moral effort, by an act of faith in the vicarious atonement of a saviour and by the grace of God. Man is not free to change himself or his destiny. There is really no purpose in resisting evil. The more one strives to develop his personality, the more enmeshed ^{one} he becomes in the toils of painful existence. The very will to live is at the root of man's suffering and unhappiness. Man should forego all desire, all ambition, even good ambitions, and await the blessedness of release from the weary and pointless cycle of change into self-disintegration and non-existence. Death is better than life.

It is not doing injustice to the great religions of mankind to suggest that their predominant motif is pessimism, resignation and other-worldliness; nor, in so doing, are we denying ^{them} ~~their~~ spiritual grandeur or the high elevation attained by some of them.

Nor is it to suggest that similar moods are not to be found anywhere in the far-flung domains of Jewish literature wherein, through the ages, ritualists and pietists, rationalists and mystics, traditionalists and reformers, priests and prophets, recorded their views. Numerous sects flourished among our people, especially during the Second Commonwealth. "Israel was not dispersed," declared one of the Rabbis, "until it broke up into twenty-four heterodox sects." Some of them were undoubtedly influenced by the Oriental theosophies prevalent in their environment. Some over-emphasized one or another tenet of Judaism, and in so doing, upset the spiritual balance, the unique ethical equipoise which distinguishes our historic faith. In most instances it was a case where sound ideas were followed through relentlessly to their logical conclusion, and by that very consistency, they became illogical and unwholesome, reduced to absurdity. But they never constituted elemental ideas in Judaism, and in spite of the variety and at times contradictory religious views and opinions recorded in our literature, it is not difficult to discern the outlines of the major trends in Judaism, the key ideas which were occasionally hidden beneath the luxuriant creepers of subsequent commentary and exposition. It is not difficult to discover beneath the restless surface eddies the deep and steady channels of the permanent attitudes which carried on undeflected through the ages.

The great insights of Judaism are easily recognizable in all the stages of its development, and especially its concept of man and of human progress. They derive from a unique religious humanism which sifted and screened the copious beliefs of the Oriental world and rejected all that was extreme and excessive, all that was over-gorged either with sensuality or spirituality, all that denied reality or was blinded by it, all that deified man or degraded him. Judaism was a movement of purification and of equilibrium, achieving for the religious life of man what Greece achieved for his artistic and intellectual life, a sobriety of measure and order which we are wont to call classicism.

In the unique construction of Judaism, man, for example, was indeed conceived as fashioned out of the earth, but in the image of God. He is certainly bound by his physical and mental limitations, but he is boundless in moral aspiration and is possessed of adequate instruments with which to change the face of the earth, the structure of society and his own personal life. Man is finite and yet not helpless. Man is very important in God's scheme of things. There is evil in the world, but it can be overcome through repentance and aspiration, and therein lies the meaning and adventure of life. Life is good and a gracious gift of God. To love God one need not hate the world. Life should not be feared or contemned or renounced, but sanctified and enjoyed through wholesome living in which the whole of man - body, mind and soul - are fulfilled. Man is exalted through his struggles for the establishment of the Kingdom of universal justice, brotherhood and peace on earth. Evil must be fought and eradicated, and justice must be established in the gate, and man may be sustained and inspired by the convictions that the major processes of history move purposefully toward a definite and benign goal. Man's principle concern should be with life this side of the grave since "the hidden things belong to God but the things that are revealed belong to us and our children." These are the all-suffusing ideas of Judaism, its inner fluid and its inner force.

Other religions possess one or more of these ideas. Some adopted them from Judaism; but Judaism has woven them into a unified and unique pattern, has coordinated them into a dynamic religious philosophy and ethical code which, when applied, powerfully influenced the civilization of mankind in the past and must continue to influence it in the future. That other faiths and groups have accepted some of Judaism's teachings and are working today in the same direction should greatly hearten us. It would be a strange logic, indeed, if such endorsement of our faith by others were to be used to justify the surrender of our own religious and group identity.

It is with high confidence, therefore, ^{וְנִצָּח}that the teachers of Judaism today can confront this exciting, promising, but spiritually turbulent and confused age. They ^{have in their keeping} ~~are possessed of~~ the medicine for the healing of the nations. What they have to say is free from ~~any~~ inner contradiction, incontrovertibly relevant and indispensable, sound in program, sound in technique, sound in spirit, and directed to a world which God created not for chaos, but one which He formed for an abiding and pleasant dwelling place for man.

✓ Nor need they fear any more the hostility of science. The physical sciences are no longer battering at the besieged citadel of religion as they did in the 19th and the early 20th centuries. The mechanistic view of the universe has been largely abandoned. Physics is no longer committed to a law of determinism. The philosophy of materialism has suffered severe discredit in our day at the hands of science. If it is not yet an avowed ally of religion, science is certainly no longer its formidable antagonist. Science itself stands face to face with many unsolved and unsolvable mysteries. In science as well as in religion, one has to operate with basic terms which cannot be defined and with basic propositions which cannot be proved, and in science, too, with every new insight comes a new obscurity.

Thus, within the framework of their acknowledged unknowables, both science and religion are proceeding today uncompetitively to develop on the basis of their experience, insights and intuitions, power and wisdom for the greater ^{glory} ~~service~~ of man.

The religious teacher has every ground for proclaiming his message to the world today ^{וְנִצָּח} boldly, with assurance and authority, and without fear that the findings of science may tomorrow shatter the very foundations of his faith.

✓ The religious teacher in Israel may find additional confidence and strengthening in his ministry in the fulfillment in our day of a great historic hope which for so long seemed to be unrealizable, and in the righting of a millennial wrong which seemed to be irreparable.

The hope of national restoration was always an integral part of Judaism. Our faith nurtured it and was, in turn, nurtured by it. Providentially, this long-deferred hope came to fruition in our day. It is a blessed and glorious consummation which our generation was privileged to behold. It should greatly exalt us. Our people looked forward to the time of its restoration as to a time of greatness, elation and hope. "When the Lord will bring back the captivity of Zion. . . they will say among the nations: the Lord hath done great things with thee; the Lord hath done great things with us. We shall rejoice." What has so unexpectedly transpired in our day should recharge our courage for the greater tasks which lie ahead. For the Messianic hope of our people has been realized only in part. Galut - exile - has come to an end and

"the servitude of foreign powers." But in its profounder and universal sense of the establishment of the good society of universal justice, brotherhood and peace on earth, the Messianic hope of our people is, of course, far from having been consummated. The ultimate goal of Judaism reaches beyond all national restorations and sovereignties to the time "when they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, and the earth shall be full of the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea." This Messianic hope Judaism must continue to proclaim. It can do so today more hopefully as a result of what has transpired in Jewish life. In a new, buoyant mood of achievement and vindication, the leaders of Israel may now devote themselves to the totality of Judaism's Messianic message which, in spite of the establishment of the State of Israel, remains unfulfilled. The great work is yet to be done.

The spiritual leader in our day may also be enheartened by the fact that men are turning to religion more and more as to the last sanctuary of man's freedom and dignity.

The religious shrine has from time immemorial served as sanctuary for men who sought escape from persecution or the punitive arm of government. When all else failed, man's last refuge were beside the horns of the altar. Today the church and synagogue

are, in an even more vital sense, man's last refuge from the all-demanding, all-coordinating and all-subjugating state.

Man is being made small in our day by the very systems which undertake to serve and exalt him. His rights have been curtailed by the very governments which avowedly seek to extend them. He has been denied his freedom on the plea of greater freedoms to come. It is a passing phase, I am sure, a by-product of wrong methods which are being employed to achieve good results. But in the meantime, man is being beaten down into littleness and rightlessness. Every precinct of his life is being invaded. Where is escape? Where shall the dove find resting place while the flood waters cover the earth, except in the ark of faith? Where shall man find shelter for his self-esteem and dignity, sanctuary from the relentless collective rhythms of his world? Where but in the courts of the living God! where man is never subordinated except to God, where he is thought of as "a little lower than the angels" - where he is held inviolate in his spiritual dignity as a child of God. "How lovely is Thy dwelling-place, O Lord of hosts! My spirit longs and pines for the courts of the Lord." "For in Thee doth my soul take refuge, and in the shadow of Thy ways will I take refuge until the calamities be over-past."

It is not so much for peace of mind that men and women are turning to religion today but to escape the frightening attrition of their spiritual sovereignty, to find sanctuary from the violent forces which threaten to liquidate their inherent human dignity and submerge and nullify them.

To reassure them of their inalienable human worth and greatness, the spiritual teacher comes to man today with the comforting message of his faith:

"God crowns man with glory and honor." It is a welcome message, indeed! And men hunger for it. It appeals to the greatness in man, to his full status and stature, and by so doing, it helps to make him great as well as to demand greatly of himself.

You are being ordained into the Rabbinate in times dangerous and convulsive, and yet, into great and prophetic times; and I would urge you to strive to match your hour. Strive for greatness! How?

Have a high regard for your calling. It is a great calling. Give to it unreservedly your enfranchised minds and your understanding hearts. Honor it with your full substance and let your substance grow with increasing knowledge garnered through the advancing years and with the experiences which life will engraven in your hearts. How much of the basic vocabulary of our faith stems from the root terms of learning and teaching: Torah, Talmud, Mishna, Gemara, Midrash, Tana, Amora, Sabora, Talmud Chacham! You, too, will be teachers - teachers of the good book, the good life, the good society. Our profession is not necessarily one of the specialized scholar, but most assuredly it is one of the faithful and avid student and learner.

Throughout our lives we must be men of the book and men of books. Religious mystics of other faiths at times came to despise learning and books. "Books!" exclaimed the famous Sufi of Islam, Abu Sa'id, "Ye are excellent guides, but it is absurd to trouble about a guide after the goal has been reached." He also said, "The first step in Sufism is the breaking of ink-pots and the tearing up of books and the forgetting of knowledge."

This mood was practically unknown even among the mystics of Judaism, for their very mysticism was grounded in literature, in the occult and recondite interpretation of the phrases, words, letters, events and characters of the book of books - the Bible.

In order that we may speak with authority and with an inner quickening and bring knowledge and insight to those who will turn to us as to trusted teachers and guides, we must be equipped maximally. Whatever else our ministry is called upon to do for our fellowmen, it must certainly instruct the ignorant.

It must bring light to those who cannot see into the heart and the meaning of things

. Without knowledge, gathering and expanding,

blending the old and the new, and maturing into a wisdom adequate for ministration, we cannot instruct, and without replenishing our own inner light, we cannot enlighten the eyes of others.

We hold our calling high ^{הרמה} when our spoken word is carefully weighed and carefully prepared. ^{הנהגה} "The word of the Lord is refined of all dross." Words come easily, especially to those who are glib of tongue, but they are not always the responsible words or the helpful words. Words spoken in haste and unpremeditated, and opinions and judgments expressed which are not fully tested and substantiated, or true words spoken in bitterness without love, are unworthy of our high calling which must depend so much on the word, the dowered, the appropriate, the timely, and the timeless word. Like every other profession, ours, too, has its firm canons of craftsmanship and its exacting and meticulous standards of technique. Isaiah praised God for enabling him to acquire ^{הנהגה} a cultivated and trained speech so that he might most effectively encourage with words those who were weary and beaten down.

It is easier to grow careless, dowdy and slovenly in the preaching profession than in any other profession on earth, and we must be warned against it. ^{אין אנו יכולים} There must be no patchwork poverty of form and expression in places where spiritual wealth is to be exhibited. To step into a pulpit and face a congregation of God inadequately prepared in content and form, to dash off a paltry sermon out of a passing headline, to force a puny homily out of a shy and unwilling text, or to set about exciting a congregation into admiration rather than persuading them into a conviction is to speak to men and women who need to understand the message of God ^{לדבר} "with contemptuous lips and with a strange and estranging speech."

There is also ^{in evidence} a growing tendency ^{to} lower ^{the} standards and canons of good taste in our synagogue programs and activities ^{in order} to compete for attention with radio and television ^{and other forms of entertainment}. The synagogue cannot in the long run maintain itself through vulgarization, and when it does succeed, for a spell, in

bringing large numbers to its halls by some stratagem of unallied and unrefined spectacles or attractions, ought not the words of Isaiah disturb and confound ^{us} them? "Who hath required this at your hands to trample My courts?" Certainly, ^a ~~some~~ few precincts ~~of human association~~ ^{ought to} should remain inviolate sanctuary in our tawdry world of increasing slag and grime, for ^{the} ~~the~~ ^{human and fellowship and the} upreaching heart and mind of man where the clear atmosphere remains unfailingly one of the beauty of holiness and ^{where} ~~in whose courts~~ everything always speaks of glory.

אין כבוד ה' אלהינו

We hold our calling high ^{אשר} when we underwrite what we say by what we are.

ה' אלהינו "The Law of the Lord is perfect." The Rabbis add: ^{אין כבוד ה' אלהינו} "When is it perfect, when it comes forth from the mouth of a perfect man", or rather, from the mouth of a man who strives after perfection, since no man is perfect. A man must come into a court of equity with clean hands. Into the court of the Lord, a Rabbi must come with clean hands and a pure heart.

Very little that we are likely to say during the course of our ministry will have been said for the first time. (Even the greatest utterances of men have had their ancestors and all ethical doctrines have passed through several cycles of existence. The most famous teachers among our people were proud to attribute their teaching to illustrious predecessors and to hang their teachings, as it were, on what they called "the majestic trees" of the past.) The fact is that we are dealing with an order of thought wherein basic new ideas are rare and infrequent. Speaking of the remarkable advances in science in our times, a recent writer declared: "The best doctor of a century ago would need a rigorous training to be fit to act as a modern hospital attendant." But assuredly, that is not the case with the best artist, poet, musician, or religious leader of a hundred or a thousand years ago. Progress in our field is not to be measured in terms of discovery, but in terms of application and fulfillment.

Wherein then will your originality consist? In the courageous timing of your message, in the inspired and compelling phrasing of that which men have known all along but have not taken to heart, but above all, in the way in which your life will surround, pervade and reenforce the utterances of your lips. These will lend distinction to your career.

"The worship of God is pure." The Rabbis add: "A man may be at home in the entire range of the Law - if he is devoid of high moral principles, he has nothing - his hands are empty."

Men, as a rule, are quick to detect those who come to them bearing the gifts of learning or charm, or brilliance or salesmanship, but with empty hands and empty hearts. It is the sincere heart which alone provides the resonant music to the spoken word, which when heard by men, deeply moves and exalts them.

We hold our calling high when we speak the truth. "The judgments of the Lord are true." The "Mishpatim" embrace those regulations and ordinances which define man's relations with his fellowmen.

Our prophets and teachers were warned not to be afraid of men, but to speak the word of God fearlessly. "Do not be afraid of them."

The things, however, to fear most are not the persecutions of men, but the seduction of adulation, self-cosnage, the temptation to be in with the right people and to bask in their sunshine, the wish to be unvexed and undisturbed, and not to face that which must, in all conscience, be faced. The Psalmist, whose superb psalm 19 I have been quoting, prays that he be delivered from the persecutions of the wicked and presumptuous men - but he also prays to be cleansed from his own hidden faults - . It is these hidden faults which we do not like to acknowledge in ourselves, which destroy us with a subtle inner corruption, so subtle that we are often not even aware of the deadly process of disintegration which is going on in us.

One need not be perennially querulous and cantankerous in the ^{sincere} service of God. One can serve God with joy and come before Him and His creatures with singing. When the High Priest, declares the Zohar, was to stand before God in the Sanctuary, he had to enter the holy place with joy, and all things about him were to express joy; for in God's service there is no room for sadness. Serving God and man is a ^{אברהם} ^{אברהם} a service of joy. To be ^{אברהם} ^{אברהם} cordial and pleasing to men is no betrayal of conscience. In our vehement days with their violent ways, the spiritual guide serves his sacred calling best when he avoids all harshness of judgment and expression, and when he speaks the word of truth with love and compassion. Some of our greatest teachers and prophets - Moses, Elijah, Isaiah - were condemned and punished by God because they berated their people too severely, or doubted them too much, because they struck with the rod of their mouth when they should have employed the gentler speech. Our message will be far more welcome and fruitful when it comes "as the dew unto Israel" - and not as a raging storm. Was it not the Law Giver himself who prayed: "May my doctrine descend as the rain, my speech as the gentle dew." ^{The word, our faith is not always that of tempest and thunder. It is also a word of fresh pastures and still and restful waters}

^{אברהם} ^{אברהם} "The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart." It is to increase the happiness of the world through an acceptance of the precepts of God and to bring joy to the tired hearts of men that we have undertaken our religious ministry, not to vindicate certain ethical abstractions. It is not enough to worship God - one must worship Him ^{אברהם} ^{אברהם} "with joyfulness and with gladness and goodness of heart."

There is so much tragedy in our world today, and sorrow and anxiety that the faithful shepherd of men will strive to comfort and reassure men, encourage and strengthen them - rather than increase their consternation. The prophet Ezekiel prophesied against the shepherds of Israel because they had not strengthened the weak nor healed the sick nor bound up the wounded nor brought back the strayed nor sought out the lost, but with rigor and harshness ruled over them. ^{אברהם} ^{אברהם}

Our actions should be guided always by the three-fold love -

Without the love of God, man and Israel in our hearts, we shall be offering through our ministry strange fires upon the high altars of God.

But there are times when even the kindly shepherd must lead with a firm hand. There are times - and they come not infrequently in the life of a Rabbi - when at the behest of his sacred calling and in defense of his own immortal and undishonored soul, he must stand up and bear witness to the truth that is in him regardless; when he must be like "an iron pillar, like brazen walls", against king and princes and priests and people. The sincere and faithful Rabbi will know, beyond any peradventure of doubt, when those challenging and undeniable moments arrive, for the hand of God will be heavy upon him, and he will step forward then with all the power and authority that is in him "to declare unto Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin."

But let us not confound religious truth with political or economic partisanship, with total identification with one or another system of politics or economics. The role of the religious teacher is not to be the partisan or apologist for systems. No system completely meets the exacting demands of religion. Whether it be capitalism, socialism or communism or any of their numerous overlapping forms, there are basic principles of human rights and essential social ideals which are at stake in each, and the religious teacher must at all times remain free to defend these rights and ideals for which no system is adequate guarantee. We have seen in our day that even the rule of peasant and proletariat does not insure society against abuse of power, the exploitation of man, and the defeat of the spiritual promise of human life.

My dear friends: Thirty-seven years ago, on a Sabbath afternoon in June, I was ordained Rabbi at the Hebrew Union College at the hands of my revered teacher, Dr. Kaufman Kohler. For the valedictory I took as my text the verse in Joel

"Your old men shall dream dreams, your young men

shall see visions." It was during the first year of the first World War. ^{that I was ordained} Much has occurred in our world since that time - wars and revolutions and the most appalling cataclysm in ~~the annals of~~ Jewish history. These have been years of ~~agitation~~, conflict and disaster, but they have also been immense and creative years. Nearly four ^{and eventful} changeful decades have elapsed since that time, and were I to choose a text today to enfold my message to ^{you} ~~men~~ who are about to be ordained as Rabbis, I should choose the identical text from the book of the prophet Joel. For ^{to all of you, and to one of you -} עֵינֵינוּ יְהוָה שָׁלֵחַ. There is yet room for vision ⁱⁿ for the days to come. עֵינֵינוּ יְהוָה שָׁלֵחַ "There is yet a vision for the appointed time, ~~prophetic of great things to come~~, which will not deceive. If it tarry, wait for it. For it will surely come." There is every reason for you to look forward confidently ~~into~~ the future - to see visions of better things to come - to plan and build with all the ardor of your lives bridges into the future athwart impassable gulfs for the eager feet of men, and ladders betwixt heaven and earth. The days to come will surpass all the ^{achievements and the} ~~grandeurs~~ of the past.

You are entering ~~great times~~, not quiet or reposeful times, nor yet stagnant times, but great times of new plowing and sowing. You are entering a profession which will enable you to render great service. In spite of the bafflements and vexations which you will inevitably experience in your careers - for no human life and certainly no worthy human profession can escape them - I feel that your lot has fallen in a ^{pleasant} ~~choice place~~, and that you will have reason to be content with your portion in life.

וְאַתֶּם יְהוָה שָׁלֵחַ עֵינֵינוּ יְהוָה שָׁלֵחַ

You are adding your names to the roll ^{who} of a goodly company of men/through the ages dedicated their lives to a service which was worthy of their life's dedication. With your endowment and training, you may move forward ^{וְהָיִיתֶם}, intrepidly and in high spirit into the tasks and opportunities of the coming years, like "those that go their own gait, erect, stepping with freedom and command, ~~leading~~ not following." Go forth, dear ^{young colleagues} friends, possessed of yourselves, upbracing your fellowmen, instructing, and

learning from those whom you instruct, humble but fortified in confidence and self-esteem. You will be nobly rewarded in ways in which God rewards His chosen ones. You will find freedom in His service and dignity in walking humbly with Him, and the bread of life will be yours and the wine of the spirit, as you help to build His Kingdom. There will be a goodly harvest, and you will be content.



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Shortly before his death, Judah Hanasi summoned his elder son, Gamaliel, who was to succeed him in the patriarchate and said to him: ^{נהגך עליונות גדולה} "Conduct your office ~~of nasi~~ with greatness. There is a difference of opinion among scholars as to the meaning of the word ^{נהגך}. Some would read ^{נהגך עם} - "with men of high standing". The Aruch reads ^{הנהגת} as "something precious and of great value". The first interpretation appeals to me most. "Conduct your office with greatness."

Judah Hanasi was a very humble man although he occupied the most exalted office among his people. The Rabbis declared: ^{עליונות גדולה עברה} "With the death of Rabbi, humility passed away." His advice to his son, therefore, could not be taken to mean: "be haughty and of a lofty bearing, maintain a domineering attitude towards your fellowmen." It was greatness of another sort that he undoubtedly had in mind: spiritual stateliness, a mood of authority which derives from sure confidence in one's status, one's mandate, one's mission and one's future. He spoke of a high courage with which one, especially a leader, should face all the evil and all the evil-doers of the world, knowing that in the end, goodness will prevail. This quality of greatness was always dear to the heart of our people. They preferred to associate it with their teachers, their leaders and their prophets. As a symbol of ^{his} ~~their~~ newly-^{ac}quired high estate and eminence, it was the practice in Rabbinic times to spread a cloak of gold ^{הנהגת} ^{הנהגת} over the ordained at the ceremony of his ordination.

It is of such greatness that I would like to speak to you today, on the day of your ordination; for ours is a time for greatness, and the need is for great men.

Recently, I had occasion to address the American College of Physicians on the subject, "American Leadership in the World Today". I expressed the thought that this age in which we live is a great age, one of the greatest in human history. We are too near our times properly to appraise them. One requires distance in order to see great objects in their proper perspective. We ourselves are too much involved in the turmoil, the fears, and the conflicts of our day to see objectively the amazing new pattern of

life which is emerging.

Many people are quick to describe our age as materialistic, as lacking in idealism, in aim and purpose, and as drifting helplessly to disaster.

A mood of crisis is abroad in our world and there is fear in the hearts of men. Men talk of economic collapse, of a third world war, of an irrepressible conflict between the East and the West which will completely shatter our civilization. There is much violence in our day, ~~and~~ all the unleashed mendacities and vituperations of a cold war. ^{אָנזאָגן: אַז עס וועט קומען אַ דריטער וועלט קריג.} It is not only in Messianic times that arrogance and brutality increase, but in all times of upheaval and social convulsion.

There are very few people who see this age of ours as a great age. I am persuaded that it is ^{truly} ~~a~~ great age. Historic ^{events} ~~things~~, great in amplitude and consequence, are coming to pass in our day. I am not thinking at the moment of the new worlds which science is continually disclosing, the new insights into the nature of matter and energy, the new sources of power and wealth, the new methods of production, distribution, transportation and communication. I am not referring to the amazing progress in the medical sciences which has so markedly improved the health of the human race and increased the average length of life, nor to the marvels of engineering and ^{the} ~~miracles~~ of construction.

In characterizing our age as great, I am thinking in terms of social progress and welfare, in terms of human advancement and civilization. More is being done in our day for the improvement of the conditions ~~of the life~~ of the common man, for the raising of his standard of living, his health, his education, and for his protection against the disabilities of sickness, unemployment and old age, than in any generation, than in any five generations in the past. Never were more determined efforts being made to bring about a fairer sharing of the wealth that is produced and a better way of life for all.

Never have the submerged races and peoples of the earth risen as they have risen in our day to demand and to achieve, as they have to a large measure achieved, freedom and self-determination. Within the last six years one-fourth of the earth's population - more than five hundred million non-self-governing people - have obtained their political freedom. Imperialism and colonialism are in their death-throes. Backward peoples are pressing forward into the light of a new day, and the exploitation of the dark races of the earth is rapidly drawing to a close.

What we are witnessing in our day, if we have eyes not only to see things but to see into the heart of things, is not social disintegration, but a radical new re-integration of humanity, a profound change in the social evolution of man, a change not free, of course, from dangers - for there is no progress without danger - but one of boundless and immeasurable potentialities. We are witnessing one of those sharp, decisive turns in the road of human progress comparable to ~~those~~ ^{the} catastrophic metamorphoses observable in nature as in the case, for example, of the caterpillar, which at a certain stage, is transformed into the chrysalis and the chrysalis into the butterfly.

I do not wish to overdraw the picture. I am not suggesting that our age is approaching idyllic perfection, or that the millenium is just around the corner. There is not a spot on the face of the globe today where vast social wrongs and injustices do not exist, and where the masses of mankind are not, to a greater or lesser degree, still underprivileged and disadvantaged. There is no country on earth which is altogether free from class conflict, from bigotry, intolerance, slums and privation. It will take centuries, not decades or generations, before all the peoples of the world will possess even that measure of well-being, far from the optimum, which some of the most favored peoples of the world already possess.

The important thing to consider, however, is not whether we are on the eve of the millenium, but whether the major trends of our age are in the direction of the hoped-for good society, or away from it. Is our age breaking chains, or not? Is it trying

to eradicate poverty and illiteracy and to raise the standard of living of all peoples, regardless of race or color or creed? Is it trying to satisfy the legitimate aspirations of peoples to national freedom and independence? Is it trying to organize the world for peace and for international cooperation? I believe that in all these major trends, our age has given welcome evidence of great determination and of considerable progress. It is moving purposefully in the right direction - the abolition of war, the reduction of poverty, and the elimination of racial inequality. These are the three major trends of our century, and they are the major trends both in the East and the West, in the Communist as well as in the non-Communist world. What is tearing ~~these~~ ^{worlde} ~~them~~ apart is a difference not of ideology or objective, but of method.

In the solution of the problems of this great, but greatly troubled age of ours, Judaism has a vital role to play, for it is the ideals of Judaism which are really at stake in the struggle today, as well as Judaism's method for human progress. The importance of the individual, his unalienable rights, freedom, democracy, equality, brotherhood, peace - what are they but the offspring of Judaism, reared and brought up by it. And what method is available to mankind to replace the bitter methods of violence, suppression and terror, which have led to such mounting disasters in our generation, other than the method which Judaism proposed, the method of inner reformation, of Teshubah - repentance - the inner revolution of compassion and reconciliation - a method which has never been fully tried in the world and which today is being ignored more thoroughly than at any time in human history.

Judaism has the true spirit with which to confront this upreaching age of ours, wild with spiritual confusion; for it has unswerving faith in man, in mankind and in human progress. In this regard Judaism is quite unique among the religions of mankind - as unique as were its God-concept, its prophets, its synagogue and its prayer worship. With the possible exception of Zoroastrianism, faith in man and in human progress is not present, commandingly, if at all, in Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism,

Christianity or Islam. Indeed, belief in human progress belongs only to a very small portion of the human race. The predominant mood of most historic religions is pessimism. Most religious philosophies from ancient ~~A~~gnosticism, Stoicism and Cynicism to modern Existentialism are grounded in deep pessimism and ~~dis~~illusionment. Man is hopelessly trapped and cannot escape the predicament of his own existence. He cannot hope to solve the entangled ethical paradoxes of his life. He cannot help himself. He needs redemption and a redeemer. The world is not a good place to live in. It is evil. No real happiness is possible in it. The good society cannot be established on earth. ^{over} Man must be saved ~~from his original depravity~~ and his salvation can be achieved, not by merit or moral effort, by an act of faith in the vicarious atonement of a saviour and by the grace of God. Man is not free to change himself or his destiny. There is really no purpose in resisting evil. The more one strives to develop his personality, the more enmeshed he becomes in the toils of painful existence. The very will to live is at the root of man's suffering and unhappiness. Man should forego all desire, all ambition, even good ambitions, and await the blessedness of release from the weary and pointless cycle of change into self-disintegration and non-existence. Death is better than life.

It is not doing injustice to the great religions of mankind to suggest that their predominant motif is pessimism, resignation and other-worldliness; nor in so doing are we denying their spiritual grandeur or the high elevation attained by some of them. Nor is it to suggest that similar moods are not to be found ^{anywhere} ~~here and there~~ in the far-flung domains of Jewish literature wherein, through the ages, ritualists and pietists, rationalists and mystics, traditionalists and reformers, priests and prophets, recorded their views. Numerous sects flourished among our people, especially during the Second Commonwealth. "Israel was not dispersed," declared one of the Rabbis, "until it broke up into twenty-four heterodox sects." Some of them were undoubtedly influenced by the

Oriental theosophies prevalent in their environment. Some over-emphasized one or another tenet of Judaism, and in so doing, upset the spiritual balance, the unique ethical equipoise which distinguishes our historic faith. In most instances it was a case where sound ideas were followed through relentlessly to their logical conclusion, and by that very consistency, they became illogical and unwholesome, reduced to ~~obscurity~~ ^{absurdity}. But they never constituted elemental ideas in Judaism, and in spite of the variety and at times contradictory religious views and opinions recorded in our literature, it is not difficult to discern the outlines of the major trends in Judaism, the key ideas which were occasionally hidden beneath the luxuriant creepers of subsequent commentary and exposition. It is not difficult to discover beneath the restless surface eddies the deep and steady channels of the permanent attitudes which carried on undeflected through the ages.

The great insights of Judaism are easily recognizeable in all the stages of its development, and especially its concept of man and of human progress. They derive from a unique religious humanism which sifted and screened the copious beliefs of the Oriental world and rejected all that was extreme and excessive, all that was over-gorged either with sensuality or spirituality, all that ~~derived~~ ^{denied} reality or was blinded by it, all that deified man or degraded him. Judaism was a movement of purification and of equilibrium, achieving for the religious life of man what Greece achieved for his artistic and intellectual life, a sobriety of measure and order which we are wont to call classicism.

In the unique construction of Judaism, man, for example, was indeed conceived as fashioned out of the earth, but in the image of God. He is certainly bound by his physical and mental limitations, but he is boundless in moral aspiration and is possessed of adequate instruments with which to change the face of the earth, the structure of society and his own personal life. Man is finite and yet not helpless. Man is very important in God's scheme of things. There is evil in the world, but it can be overcome through repentance and aspiration, and therein lies the meaning and

Man is lost in original sin or homelessness in an
infinite and impersonal universe.



To love God you need not
hate the world. ~~Love~~
~~is the best thing~~
in ~~the world~~

adventure of life. Life is good and a gracious gift of God. Life should not be feared or contemned or renounced, but sanctified and enjoyed through wholesome living in which the whole of man - body, mind and soul - are fulfilled. Man is exalted through his struggles for the establishment of the Kingdom of universal justice, brotherhood and peace on earth. Evil must be fought and eradicated, and justice must be established in the gate ^{over} Man's principle concern should be with life this side of the grave since "the hidden things belong to God but the things that are revealed belong to us and our children." These are the all-suffusing ideas of Judaism, its inner fluid and its inner force.

Other religions ~~of mankind~~ possess one or more of these ideas. Some adopted them from Judaism; but Judaism has woven them into a unified and unique pattern, has coordinated them into a dynamic religious philosophy and ethical code which, when applied, powerfully influenced the civilization of mankind in the past and must continue to influence it in the future. That other faiths and groups have accepted some of Judaism's teachings and are working today in the same direction should greatly hearten us. It would be a strange logic, indeed, if such endorsement of our faith ^{by} ~~on the part of~~ others were to be used to justify the surrender of our own religious and group identity.

It is with high confidence, therefore, ^{by} ~~that~~ that the teachers of Judaism today can confront this exciting, promising, but spiritually turbulent and confused age. They are possessed of the medicine for the healing of the nations. What they have to say is free from any inner contradiction, incontrovertibly relevant and indispensable, sound in program, sound in technique, sound in spirit, and directed to a world which God created not for chaos, but one which He formed for an abiding and pleasant dwelling place for man.

and man may be sustained and inspired by the conviction that the major processes of history move purposefully toward a definite and benign goal.



Nor need they fear any more the hostility of science. The physical sciences are no longer battering at the besieged citadel of religion as they did in the 19th and the early 20th centuries. The mechanistic view of the universe has been largely abandoned. Physics is no longer committed to a law of determinism. The philosophy of materialism has suffered severe discredit in our day at the hands of science. If it is not yet an avowed ally of religion, science is certainly no longer its formidable antagonist. Science itself stands face to face with many unsolved and unsolvable mysteries. In science as well as in religion, one has to operate with basic terms which cannot be defined and with basic propositions which cannot be proved, and in science, too, with every new insight comes a new obscurity.

Thus, within the framework of their acknowledged unknowables, both science and religion are proceeding today uncompetitively to develop on the basis of their experience, insights and intuitions, power and wisdom for the greater service of man.

The religious teacher has every ground for proclaiming his message to the world today *בברכה* boldly, with assurance and authority, and without fear that the findings of science may tomorrow shatter the very foundations of his faith.

The religious teacher in Israel may find additional confidence and strengthening in his ministry in the fulfillment in our day of a great historic hope which for so long seemed to be unrealizable, and in the righting of a millennial wrong which seemed to be irreparable.

The hope of national restoration was always an integral part of Judaism. Our faith nurtured it and ^{was} ~~it~~ in turn ^{fruition} ~~was~~ nurtured by it. Providentially, this long-deferred hope came to ~~pass~~ in our day. It is a blessed and glorious consummation which our generation was privileged to behold. It should greatly exalt us. Our people looked forward to the time of its restoration as to a time of greatness, elation and hope. "When the Lord will bring back the captivity of Zion. . . they will say among the nations: the Lord hath done great things with thee; the Lord hath done great things with us. We shall rejoice." What has ^{so unexpectedly} ~~almost miraculously~~ transpired in our day should

recharge our courage for the greater tasks which lie ahead. For the Messianic hope of our people has been realized only in part. Galut - exile - has come to an end and *אין גלות* "the servitude of foreign powers". But in its profounder and universal sense of *אין ארץ*, the establishment of the good society, of universal justice, brotherhood and peace on earth, the Messianic hope of our people is, of course, far from having been consummated. The ultimate goal of Judaism reaches beyond all national restorations and sovereignties "to the time when they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, and the earth shall be full of the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea." This Messianic hope Judaism must continue to proclaim. It can do so today more hopefully as a result of what has transpired in Jewish life. In a new, *buoyant* mood of *achievement and* ~~vindication and buoyancy~~ the leaders of Israel may now devote themselves to the totality of Judaism's Messianic message which, ~~with~~ in spite of the establishment of the State of Israel, remains unfulfilled. The great work is yet to be done.

The spiritual leader in our day may also be enheartened by the fact that men are turning to religion more and more as to the last sanctuary *of man's* ~~for the~~ freedom and dignity, ~~of man.~~

The religious shrine has from time immemorial served as sanctuary for men who *sought* ~~were escaping~~ *from* persecution or the punitive arm of government. When all else failed, man's last refuge were beside the horns of the altar. Today the church and synagogue are, in an even more vital sense, man's last refuge from the all-demanding, all-coordinating and all-subjugating state.

Man is being made small in our day by the very systems which undertake to serve and exalt him. His rights have been curtailed by the very governments which avowedly seek to extend them. He has been denied his freedom on the plea of greater freedoms to come. It is a passing phase, I am sure, a by-product of wrong methods which are being employed to achieve good results. But in the meantime, man is being beaten down into littleness and rightlessness. Every precinct of his life is being invaded. Where

is escape? Where shall the dove find resting place while the flood waters cover the earth except in the ark of faith? Where shall man find shelter for his self-esteem and dignity, sanctuary from the relentless collective rhythms of his ^{world} ~~meed~~? Where but in the courts of the living God, where man ~~was~~ ^{is} never subordinated except to God, where he is thought of us "a little lower than the angels" - where he is held inviolate in his spiritual dignity as a child of God. "How lovely is Thy dwelling-place, O Lord of hosts! My spirit longs and pines for the courts of the Lord." "For in Thee doth my soul take refuge, and in the shadow of Thy ways will I take refuge until the calamities be over-past."

It is not so much for peace of mind that men and women are turning to religion today but to escape the frightening attrition of their spiritual sovereignty, to find sanctuary from the violent forces ~~abroad in the world~~ which threaten to liquidate their inherent human dignity and submerge and nullify them.

To reassure them of their inalienable human worth and greatness, the spiritual teacher comes to men today with the comforting message of his faith: (ה'קטן וזך) 3/201
"God crowns man with glory and honor." It is a welcome message, indeed! And men hunger for it. It appeals to the greatness in man, to his full status and stature, and by so doing, it helps to make him great as well as to demand greatly of himself.

You are being ordained into the Rabbinate in times dangerous and convulsive, and yet, ^{into} ~~with~~ great and prophetic times; and I would urge you to strive to match your hour. Strive for greatness! How?

Have a high regard for your calling. It is a great calling. Give to it unreservedly your enfranchised minds and your understanding hearts. Honor it with your full substance and let your substance grow with increasing knowledge garnered through ^{advancing} the years and with the experiences which life will engraven in your hearts. How much of the basic vocabulary of our faith stems from the root terms of learning and teaching: Torah, Talmud, Mishna, Gemara, Midrash, Tana, Amora, Sabora, Talmud Chocham!

You, too, will be teachers - teachers of the good book, the good life, the good society. Our profession is not necessarily one of the specialized scholar, but most assuredly it is one of the faithful and avid student and learner.

Throughout our lives we must be men of the Book and men of books. Religious mystics of other faiths at times came to despise learning and books. "Books!" exclaimed the famous Suff of Islam, Abu Saïd, "Ye are excellent guides, but it is absurd to trouble about a guide after the goal has been reached." He also said, "The first step in Sufism is the breaking of ink-pots and the tearing up of books and the forgetting of knowledge."

This mood was ~~not~~ practically unknown even among the mystics of Judaism, for their very mysticism was grounded in literature, in the occult and recondite interpretation of the phrases, words, letters, events and characters of the book of books - the Bible.

In order that we may speak with authority and with an inner quickening and bring knowledge and insight to those who will turn to us as to trusted teachers and guides, we must be equipped maximally. Whatever else our ministry is called upon to do for our fellowmen, it must certainly instruct the ignorant. *120 XN/STN 2/1/6 1-1/30*
If must
 and bring light to those who cannot see into the heart and the meaning of things

ר' אברהם אבינו ה"ל אלה. Without knowledge, gathering and expanding, blending the old and the new, and maturing into a wisdom adequate for ministration, we cannot instruct, and without replenishing our own inner light, we cannot enlighten the eyes of others.

We hold our calling high נאמר when our spoken word is carefully weighed and carefully prepared. נאמר ה' נאמר "The word of the Lord is refined of all dross." Words come easily, especially to those who are glib of tongue, but they are not always the responsible words or the helpful words. Words spoken in haste and unpremeditated, and opinions and judgments expressed which are not fully tested and substantiated, or true words spoken in bitterness without love, are unworthy of our high calling which must depend so much on the word, the dowered, the appropriate, the timely,

and the timeless word. Like every other profession, ours, too, has its firm canons of craftsmanship and its exacting and meticulous standards of technique. Isaiah praised God for enabling him to acquire *עבד מלך* a cultivated and trained speech so that he might most effectively encourage with words those who were weary and beaten down.

It is easier to grow careless, dowdy and slovenly in the preaching profession than in any other profession on earth, and we must be warned against it. *חלילה לנו* There must be no patchwork poverty of form and expression in places where spiritual wealth is to be exhibited. To step into a pulpit and face a congregation of God inadequately prepared in content and form, to dash off a paltry sermon out of a passing headline, to force a puny homily out of a shy and unwilling text, or to set about exciting a congregation into admiration rather than persuading them into a conviction is to speak to men and women who need to understand the message of God *על ידי* *אשר* "with contemptuous lips and with a strange and estranging speech".

There is also a growing tendency at lowering of standards and canons of good taste in our synagogue programs and activities to match the prevalent degradation and to compete for attention with radio and television. The synagogue cannot in the long run maintain itself through vulgarization, and when it does succeed, for a spell, in bringing large numbers to its halls by ^{some} stratagem of unallied and unrefined spectacles or attractions, ought not the words of Isaiah disturb and confound them? "Who hath required this at your hands to trample My courts?" Certainly, some few precincts of human association ^{should} remain inviolate sanctuary in our tawdry world of increasing slag and grime, ^{for} in the upreaching heart and mind of man where the clear atmosphere ^{remains} is unfailingly one of beauty of holiness and in whose courts ^{always} everything speaks of glory.

אשר יצא מפי

We hold our calling high *אשר* when we underwrite what we say by what we are.

אשר יצא מפי "The law of the Lord is perfect." The Rabbis add: *אשר יצא מפי*

אשר יצא מפי "When is it perfect, when it comes forth from the mouth

of a perfect man", or rather, from the mouth of a man who strives after perfection, since no man is perfect. A man must come into a court of equity with clean hands.

Into the court of the Lord, a Rabbi must come with clean hands and a pure heart.

Very little that we are likely to say ^{during the course of our university} ~~in our time~~ will have been said for the first time. Even the greatest utterances of ^{men} ~~men~~ ^{had} have their ancestors and all ethical doctrines have passed through ^{several} ~~many~~ cycles of existence. The most famous teachers among our people were proud to attribute their teaching to ~~their~~ illustrious predecessors and to hang their teachings, as it were, on what they called "the majestic trees" of the past. The fact is that we are dealing with an order of thought wherein basic new ideas are rare and infrequent. Speaking of the remarkable advances in science in our times, a recent writer declared: "The best doctor of a century ago would need a rigorous training to be fit to act as a modern hospital attendant." But assuredly, that is not the case with the best artist, poet, musician, or religious leader of a hundred or a thousand years ago. Progress in our field is not to be measured in terms of discovery ~~or new revelations~~, but in terms of application and fulfillment.

Wherein then will your originality consist? In the courageous timing of your message, in the inspired and compelling phrasing of that which men have known all along but have not taken to heart, but above all, in the way in which your life will surround, pervade and reenforce the utterances of your lips. These will lend distinction to your career. ^{הארה} "The worship of God is pure." The Rabbis add: "A man may be at home in the entire range of the Law - if he is devoid of high moral principles, he has nothing - his hands are empty."

Men ^{as a rule} are quick to detect those who come to them bearing the gifts of learning or ~~charm~~ ^{charm}, or brilliance or salesmanship, but with empty hands and empty hearts. It is the sincere heart which alone provides the resonant music to the spoken word, which when heard by men deeply moves and ^{exalts} ~~stirs~~ them.

We hold our calling high ^{נאמר} when we speak the truth. ^{אמר ה' ויבטח} "The judgments of the Lord are true." The ^{משפטים} Mishpatim embrace those regulations and ordinances which define man's relations with his fellow-men.

Our prophets and teachers were warned not to be afraid of men, but to speak the word of God fearlessly. ^{אל תפחדו מהם} "Do not be afraid of them."

The things, however, to fear most are not the persecutions of men, but the seduction of adulation, self-cozenage, the temptation to be in with the right people and to bask in their sunshine, the wish to be unvexed and undisturbed, and not to face that which must, in all conscience, be faced. The Psalmist, whose superb psalm 19 ^{נאמר} have been quoting, prays that he be delivered from the persecutions of the wicked and presumptuous men - ^{אל תפחדו מהם} - but he also prays ^{אל תפחדו מהם} ~~that~~ ^{to} be cleansed from his own hidden faults - ^{אל תפחדו מהם} ~~אל תפחדו מהם~~. It is these hidden faults which we do not like to acknowledge in ourselves, which destroy us with a subtle inner corruption, so subtle that we are often not even aware of the ^{deadly} ~~lethal~~ process of disintegration which is going on in us.

One need not be perennially querulous and cantankerous in the service of God. One can serve God with joy and come before Him and His creatures with singing. When the High Priest, declares the Zohar, was to stand before God in the Sanctuary, he had to enter the holy place with joy, and all things about him were to express joy; for in God's service there is no room for sadness. ^{Serving God and man is a joy} ~~Our people associated gladness and pleasantness with the service of God and man~~. To be ^{אמר ה' ויבטח} cordial and pleasing to men is no betrayal of conscience. In our vehement days with their violent ^{ways} ~~ways~~, the spiritual guide serves his sacred calling best when he avoids all harshness of judgment and expression, and when he speaks the word of truth with love and compassion. Some of our greatest teachers and prophets - Moses, Elijah, Isaiah - were condemned and punished by God because they ~~denounced and berated~~ ^{because they} their people too severely, or doubted them too much, ~~and~~ struck with the rod of their mouth

when they should have employed the gentler speech. Our message ^{will be} far more ^{welcome} useful and ^{fruitful} ~~fruitful~~ when it comes "as the dew unto Israel" - and not as a raging storm. Was it not the Law Giver himself who prayed: "May my doctrine descend as the rain, my speech as the gentle dew."

ז' מנחם כ"ב ו' כ"ג "The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart."

— It is to increase the happiness of the world through an acceptance of the precepts of God and to bring joy to the tired hearts of men that we have undertaken our religious ministry, not to vindicate certain ethical abstractions. It is not enough to worship God - one must worship Him ^{ז' ז' כ"ב ו' כ"ג} "with joyfulness and with gladness and goodness of heart."

There is so much tragedy in our world, ^{to-day} and sorrow and anxiety and ~~insecurity~~ ^{will} that the faithful shepherd of men ^{will} strives to comfort and reassure men, encourage and strengthen them - rather than increase their consternation. The prophet Ezekiel prophesied against the shepherds of Israel because they ^{had} ~~have~~ not strengthened the weak nor healed the sick nor bound up the wounded nor brought back the strayed nor sought out the lost, but with rigor and harshness ruled over them. ^{ז' ז' כ"ב ו' כ"ג}

Our actions should be guided always by the three-fold love: ^{ז' ז' כ"ב ו' כ"ג} Without the love of God, man and Israel in our hearts, we shall be offering through our ministry strange fires ^{up on} ~~at~~ the high altars of God.

But there are times when even the kindly shepherd must lead with a firm hand. There are times - and they come not infrequently in the life of a Rabbi - when at the behest of his sacred calling and in defense of his own immortal and undishonored soul, ^{he} ~~a Rabbi~~ must stand up and bear witness to the truth that is in him regardless; when he must be like "an iron pillar, like brazen walls", against king and princes and priests and people. The sincere and faithful Rabbi will know, beyond any peradventure of doubt, when those challenging and undeniable moments arrive, for the hand of God will be heavy upon him, and he will step forward then with all the power and authority that is in him "to declare unto Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin."

But let us ^{not confound} ~~always remember~~ that religious truth ^{is not to be found} ~~is not to be found~~ in total identification with ^{one or another} ~~any one~~ system of politics or economics, ^{with political & economic} ~~and~~ the role of the religious teacher is not to be the partisan or apologist ^{for} ~~of one or another~~ systems. No system completely meets the exacting demands of religion. Whether it be capitalism, socialism or communism or any of ^{their} ~~the~~ numerous ^{overlapping} ~~interpenetrating~~ forms, ^{there} ~~that~~ are basic principles of human rights and essential social ideals which are at stake in each, and the religious teacher must at all times remain free to defend these rights and ideals for which no system is adequate guarantee. We have seen in our day that even the rule of peasant and proletariat does not insure society against abuse of power, ^{the} ~~ex-~~ ploitation of ^a ~~man~~ and the defeat of the spiritual promise of human life.

My dear friends; Thirty-seven years ago, on a Sabbath afternoon in June, I was ordained Rabbi at the Hebrew Union College at the hands of my revered teacher, Dr. Kaufman Kohler. For the valedictory I took as my text the verse in Joel ^{עֲלֵי אֲנִי וְעַל אֲנִי} ~~עֲלֵי אֲנִי~~ ^{וְעַל אֲנִי} ~~וְעַל אֲנִי~~ "Your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions." It was during the first year of the first World War. Much has occurred in ^{our} ~~the~~ world since that time - wars and revolutions and the most appalling cataclysm in the annals of Jewish history. These have been years of agitation, conflict and disaster, but they have also been immense and creative years. Nearly four changeful decades have ^{elapsed since that time} ~~passed~~ and were I to choose a text today to enfold my message to ^{who are} ~~young men~~ about to be ordained, I should ^{as Rabbi} ~~prefer~~ ^{choose} the ~~same~~ identical text from the book of the prophet Joel. For ^{עֲלֵי אֲנִי וְעַל אֲנִי} ~~עֲלֵי אֲנִי~~ ^{וְעַל אֲנִי} ~~וְעַל אֲנִי~~ 3/6. There is yet room for vision for the days to come.

"There is yet a vision for the appointed time, prophetic of great things to come, ^{which} ~~it~~ will not deceive. If it tarry, wait for it. For it will surely come, ^{//} ~~without delay~~." There is every reason for you to look forward confidently into the future - to see vision ^d ~~of~~ better things to come, ^{the tasks and opportunities of} ~~the tasks and opportunities of~~ this ^{challenging} ~~challenging~~ and to plan and build with all the ^{order} ~~order~~ of your lives ^{start} ~~start~~ bridges ^{into the future} ~~into the future~~ atward impassable gulfs for the eager feet of men, and ladders ^{possessed of you} ~~possessed of you~~ Betwixt heaven and earth. The days to come will surpass all the grandeurs of the past.

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THERE IS YET ROOM FOR VISION

Commencement Address by Dr. Abba
Hillel Silver, at the Hebrew Union
College-Jewish Institute of Religion,
Cincinnati, Ohio, June 7, 1952.



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THERE IS YET ROOM FOR VISION

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Commencement Address, by ~~Dr. Abba~~
~~Hillel Silver~~, at The Hebrew Union
 College, Jewish Institute of Religion,
 Cincinnati, Ohio, June 7, 1952.

SHORTLY BEFORE HIS DEATH, JUDAH HANASI SUMMONED HIS ELDER SON, Gamaliel, who was to succeed him in the patriarchate, and said to him: "Nehog nesiutka beramah." "Conduct your office with eminence, with greatness. There is a difference of opinion among scholars as to the meaning of the word beramah. Some would read beramim—"with men of high standing." The Aruch reads it bedamim, "something precious and of great value." The first interpretation appeals to me most: "Conduct your office with greatness."

Judah Hanasi was a very humble man, although he occupied the most exalted office among his people. The Rabbis declared: "Mishemet rabbi, battah anawah." "With the death of Rabbi, humility passed away." His advice to his son, therefore, could not be taken to mean: "Be haughty and of a lofty bearing, maintain a domineering attitude towards your fellowmen." It was greatness of another sort that he undoubtedly had in mind: spiritual stateliness, a mood of authority which derives from sure confidence in one's status, one's mandate, one's mission and one's future. He spoke of a high courage with which one, especially a leader, should face all the evil and all the evil-doers of the world, knowing that in the end, goodness will prevail. This quality of greatness was always dear to the heart of our people. They preferred to associate it with their teachers, their leaders, and their prophets. As a symbol of his newly acquired high estate and eminence, it was the practice in Rabbinic times to spread a cloak of gold, golia dedahabah, over the ordained at the ceremony of his ordination.

It is of such greatness that I would like to speak to you today, on the day of your ordination; for ours is a time for greatness, and the need is for great men.

Recently, I had occasion to address the American College of Physicians on the subject, "American Leadership in the World Today." I expressed the thought that this age in which we live is a great age, one of the greatest in human history. We are too near our times properly to appraise them. One requires distance in order to see great objects in their proper perspective. We ourselves are too much involved in the turmoil, the fears, and the conflicts of our day to see objectively the amazing new pattern of life which is emerging.

Many people are quick to describe our age as materialistic, as

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lacking in idealism, in aim and purpose, and as drifting helplessly to disaster.

A mood of crisis is abroad in our world, and there is fear in the hearts of men. Men talk of economic collapse, of a third world war, of an irrepressible conflict between the East and the West which will completely shatter our civilization. There is much violence in our day, all the unleashed mendacities and vituperations of a cold war, b'ikbot meshika hutzpa gisge. It is not only in Messianic times that arrogance and brutality increase, but in all times of upheaval and social convulsion.

There are very few people who see this age of ours as a great age. I am persuaded that it is a truly great age. Historic events, great in amplitude and consequence, are coming to pass in our day. I am not thinking at the moment of the new worlds which science is continually disclosing, the new insights into the nature of matter and energy, the new sources of power and wealth, the new methods of production, distribution, transportation, and communication. I am not referring to the amazing progress in the medical sciences which has so markedly improved the health of the human race and increased the average length of life, nor to the marvels of engineering and the miracles of construction.

In characterizing our age as great, I am thinking in terms of social progress and welfare, in terms of human advancement and civilization. More is being done in our day for the improvement of the conditions of the common man, for the raising of his standard of living, his health, his education, and for his protection against the disabilities of sickness, unemployment, and old age, than in any generation, than in any five generations, in the past. Never were more determined efforts being made to bring about a fairer sharing of the wealth that is produced and a better way of life for all.

Never have the submerged races and peoples of the earth risen as they have risen in our day to demand and to achieve, as they have to a large measure achieved, freedom and self-determination. Within the last six years one-fourth of the earth's population—more than five hundred million non-self-governing people—have obtained their political freedom. Imperialism and colonialism are in their death throes. Backward peoples are pressing forward into the light of a new day, and the exploitation of the dark races of the earth is rapidly drawing to a close.

What we are witnessing in our day, if we have eyes not only to see things, but to see into the heart of things, is not social disintegration, but a radical new reintegration of humanity, a profound change in

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the social evolution of man, a change not free, of course, from dangers for there is no progress without danger but one of boundless and immeasurable potentialities. We are witnessing one of those sharp, decisive turns in the road of human progress comparable to the catastrophic metamorphoses observable in nature as in the case, for example, of the caterpillar which, at a certain stage, is transformed into the chrysalis and the chrysalis into the butterfly.

I do not wish to overdraw the picture. I am not suggesting that our age is approaching idyllic perfection, or that the millenium is just around the corner.

The important thing to consider is not whether we are on the eve of the millenium, but whether the major trends of our age are in the direction of the hoped-for good society, or away from it. Is our age breaking chains, or not? Is it trying to eradicate poverty and illiteracy and to raise the standard of living of people, regardless of race or color or creed? Is it trying to satisfy the legitimate aspirations of peoples to national freedom and independence? Is it trying to organize the world for peace and for international cooperation? I believe that in all these major trends, our age has given welcome evidence of great determination and of considerable progress. It is moving purposefully in the right direction the abolition of war, the reduction of poverty, and the elimination of racial inequality. These are the three major trends of our century, and they are the major trends both in the East and the West, in the Communist as well as in the non-Communist world. What is tearing these worlds apart is a difference not of ideology or objective, but of method.

In the solution of the problems of this great, but greatly troubled age of ours, Judaism has a vital role to play. It is the ideals of Judaism which are really at stake in the struggle today, and Judaism's method for human progress. The importance of the individual, his inalienable rights, freedom, democracy, equality, brotherhood, peace what are they but the offspring of Judaism, reared and nurtured by it. And what method is available to mankind to replace the bitter methods of violence, suppression and terror, which have led to such mounting disasters in our generation, other than the method which Judaism proposed long ago, the method of inner reformation the inner revolution of compassion and reconciliation a method which has never been fully tried in the world and which today is being ignored more thoroughly than at any time in human history.

Judaism has the true spirit with which to confront this upreaching age of ours, wild with spiritual confusion; for it has unswerving faith in man, in mankind, and in human progress. In this regard Judaism

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is quite unique among the religions of mankind ^{in this as in} as unique as were its God-concept, its prophets, its synagogue, and its prayer worship. With the possible exception of Zoroastrianism, faith in man and in human progress is not present, commanding, if at all, in Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Christianity or Islam. Indeed, belief in human progress belongs only to a very small portion of the human race. The predominant mood of most historic religions is pessimism. Most religious philosophies from ancient Gnosticism, Stoicism and Cynicism to modern Existentialism are grounded in deep pessimism and disillusionment. Man is hopelessly trapped and cannot escape the predicament of his own existence. He cannot hope to solve the entangled ethical paradoxes of his life. The world is not a good place to live in. It is evil. No real happiness is possible in it. The good society cannot be established on earth. Man is lost in original sin or homeless in an infinite and impersonal universe. He cannot help himself. He needs redemption and a redeemer. His salvation can be achieved, not by personal merit or moral effort, by an act of faith in the vicarious atonement of a saviour and by the grace of God. Man is not free to change himself or his destiny. There is really no purpose in resisting evil. The more one strives to develop his personality, the more enmeshed one becomes in the toils of painful existence. The very will to live is at the root of man's suffering and unhappiness. Man should forego all desire, all ambition, even good ambitions, and await the blessedness of release from the weary and pointless cycle of change into self-disintegration and non-existence. Death is better than life.

It is not doing injustice to the great religions of mankind to suggest that their predominant motif is pessimism, resignation, and otherworldliness; nor, in so doing, are we denying the spiritual grandeur or the high elevation attained by some of them. Nor is it to suggest that similar moods are not to be found anywhere in the far-flung domains of Jewish literature wherein, through the ages, ritualists and pietists, rationalists and mystics, traditionalists and reformers, priests and prophets, recorded their views. Numerous sects flourished among our people, especially during the Second Commonwealth. "Israel was not dispersed," declared one of the Rabbis, "until it broke up into twenty-four heterodox sects." Some of them were undoubtedly influenced by the Oriental theosophies prevalent in their environment. Some overemphasized one or another tenet of Judaism, and in so doing, upset the spiritual balance, the unique ethical equipoise which distinguishes our historic faith. In most instances it was a case where sound ideas were followed through relentlessly to their logical conclusion, and, by that very consistency, they became illogical and unwhole-

some, reduced to absurdity. But they never constituted elemental ideas in Judaism, and, in spite of the variety and at times contradictory religious views and opinions recorded in our literature, it is not difficult to discern the outlines of the major trends in Judaism, the key ideas which were occasionally hidden beneath the luxuriant growth and creepers of subsequent commentary and exposition. It is not difficult to discover beneath the restless surface eddies the deep and steady channels of the permanent attitudes which carried on undeviated through the ages.

The great insights of Judaism are easily recognizable in all the stages of its development, and especially its concept of man and of human progress. They derive from a unique religious humanism which sifted and screened the copious beliefs of the Oriental world and rejected all that was extreme and excessive, all that was over-gorged either with sensuality or spirituality, all that denied reality or was blinded by it, all that deified man or degraded him. Judaism was a movement of purification and of equilibrium, achieving for the religious life of man what Greece achieved for his artistic and intellectual life, a sobriety of measure and order which we are wont to call classicism.

In the unique construction of Judaism, man, for example, was indeed conceived as fashioned out of the earth, but in the image of God. He is certainly bound by his physical and mental limitations, but he is boundless in moral aspiration and is possessed of adequate instruments with which to change the face of the earth, the structure of society, and his own personal life. Man is finite and yet not helpless. Man is very important in God's scheme of things. There is evil in the world, but it can be overcome through repentance and aspiration, and therein lies the true meaning and adventure of life. Life is good and a gracious gift of God. To love God one need not hate the world. Life should not be feared or contemned or renounced, but sanctified and enjoyed through wholesome living in which the whole of man — body, mind and soul — are fulfilled. Man is exalted through his struggles for the establishment of the Kingdom of universal justice, brotherhood, and peace on earth. Evil must be fought and eradicated, and justice must be established in the gate, and man may be sustained and inspired by the convictions that the major processes of history move purposefully toward a definite and benign goal. Man's principal concern should be with life this side of the grave, since "the hidden things belong to God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and our children." These are the all-suffusing ideas of Judaism, its inner fluid and its inner force.

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Other religions possess one or more of these ideas. Some adopted them from Judaism; but Judaism has woven them all into a unified and unique pattern, has coordinated them into a dynamic religious philosophy and ethical code which, when applied, powerfully influenced the civilization of mankind in the past and must continue to influence it in the future. That other faiths and groups have accepted some of Judaism's teachings and are working today in the same direction should greatly hearten us. It would be a strange logic, indeed, if such endorsement of our faith by others were to be used to justify the surrender of our own religious and group identity.

It is with high confidence, therefore, *beramah*, that the teachers of Judaism today can confront this exciting, promising, but spiritually turbulent and confused age. They have in their keeping the medicine for the healing of the nations. What they have to say is free from inner contradiction, incontrovertibly relevant and indispensable, sound in program, sound in technique, sound in spirit, and directed to a world which God created not for chaos, but one which He formed for an abiding and pleasant dwelling place for man.

Nor need they fear any more the hostility of science. The physical sciences are no longer battering at the besieged citadel of religion as they did in the 19th and the early 20th centuries. The mechanistic view of the universe has been largely abandoned. Physics is no longer committed to a law of determinism. The philosophy of materialism has suffered severe discredit in our day in the hands of science. If it is not yet an avowed ally of religion, science is certainly no longer its formidable antagonist. Science itself stands face to face with many unsolved and unsolvable mysteries. In science, as well as in religion, one has to operate with basic terms which cannot be defined and with basic propositions which cannot be proved, and in science, too, with every new insight comes a new obscurity.

Thus, within the framework of their acknowledged unknowables, both science and religion are proceeding today uncompetitively to develop on the basis of their experience, insights and intuitions, power and wisdom for the greater glory of man.

The religious teacher has every ground for proclaiming his message to the world today, *beramah*, boldly, with assurance and authority, and without fear that the findings of science may tomorrow shatter the very foundations of his faith.

The religious teacher in Israel may find additional confidence and strengthening in his ministry in the fulfillment in our day of a great historic hope which for so long seemed to be unrealizable, and in the righting of a millennial wrong which seemed to be irreparable.

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The hope of national restoration was always an integral part of Judaism. Our faith nurtured it and was, in turn, nurtured by it. Providentially, this long-deferred hope came to fruition in our day. It is a blessed and glorious consummation which our generation was privileged to behold. It should greatly exalt us. Our people always looked forward to the time of its restoration as to a time of greatness, elation, and hope. "When the Lord will bring back the captivity of Zion . . . they will say among the nations: the Lord hath done great things with thee: the Lord hath done great things with us. We shall rejoice." What has so unexpectedly transpired in our day should recharge our courage for the greater tasks which lie ahead. For the Messianic hope of our people has been realized only in part. ~~Galat~~ *Galut* — ~~exile~~ — has come to an end and *shi'bud malkuyot*, "The servitude of foreign powers." But in its profounder and universal sense of *aharit ha-yamim*, the establishment of the good society of universal justice, brotherhood, and peace on earth, the Messianic hope of our people is, of course, far from having been consummated. The ultimate goal of Judaism reaches beyond all national restorations and sovereignties to the time "when they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, and the earth shall be full of the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea." This Messianic hope Judaism must continue to proclaim. It can do so today more hopefully as a result of what has transpired in Jewish life. In a new, buoyant mood of achievement and vindication, the leaders of Israel may now devote themselves to the totality of Judaism's Messianic message which, in spite of the establishment of the State of Israel, remains unfulfilled. The great work is yet to be done.

The Galut — exile —

The spiritual leader in our day may also be unheartened by the fact that men are turning to religion more and more as to the last sanctuary of man's freedom and dignity.

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The religious shrine has from time immemorial served as sanctuary for men who sought escape from persecution or the punitive arm of government. When all else failed, man's last refuge was beside the horns of the altar. Today the church and synagogue are, in an even more vital sense, man's last refuge from the all-demanding, all-coordinating and all-subjugating state.

Man is being made small in our day by the very systems which undertake to serve and exalt him. His rights have been curialed by the very governments which avowedly seek to extend them. He has been denied his freedom on the plea of greater freedoms to come. It is a passing phase, I am sure, a by-product of wrong methods which are being employed to achieve good results. But in the meantime,

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man is being beaten down into littleness and rightlessness. Every precinct of his life is being invaded. Where is escape? Where shall the dove find resting place while the flood waters cover the earth, except in the ark of faith? Where shall man find shelter for his self-esteem and dignity, sanctuary from the relentless collective rhythms of his world? Where but in the courts of the living God! where man is never subordinated except to God, where he is thought of as "a little lower than the angels" where he is held inviolate in his spiritual dignity as a child of God. "How lovely is thy dwelling place, O Lord of hosts! My spirit longs and pines for the courts of the Lord." "For in Thee doth my soul take refuge, and in the shadow of Thy wings will I take refuge until the calamities be over-past."

It is not so much for peace of mind that men and women are turning to religion today but to escape the frightening attrition of their spiritual independence and to find sanctuary from the violent forces which threaten to liquidate their inherent human dignity and to submerge and nullify them as sovereign personalities.

To reassure them of their inalienable human worth and greatness, the spiritual teacher comes to men today with the comforting message of his faith: *Wehabod wehadar te'atru*, "God crowns man with glory and honor." It is a welcome message, indeed! And men hunger for it. It appeals to the greatness in man, to his full status and stature, and by so doing, it helps to make him great as well as to demand greatly of himself.

You are being ordained into the Rabbinate in times dangerous and convulsive, and yet, into great and prophetic times; and I would urge you to strive to match your hour. Strive for greatness! How?

Have a high regard for your calling! It is a great calling. Give to it unreservedly your enfranchised minds and your understanding hearts. Honor it with your full substance and let your substance grow with increasing knowledge garnered through the advancing years and with the experiences which life will engraven in your hearts. How much of the basic vocabulary of our faith stems from the root terms of learning and teaching: Torah, Talmud, Mishnah, Gemara, Midrash, Tana, Amora, Sabora, Talmid Chacham! You, too, will be teachers teachers of the good book, the good life, the good society. Our profession is not necessarily one of the specialized scholar, but most assuredly it is one of the faithful and avid student and learner.

Throughout our lives we must be men of the Book and men of books. Religious mystics of other faiths at times came to despise learning and books. "Books!" exclaimed the famous Sufi of Islam, Abu Sa'id, "Ye are excellent guides, but it is absurd to trouble about a

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guide after the goal has been reached." He also said, "The first step in Sufism is the breaking of ink-pots and the tearing up of books and the forgetting of knowledge."

This mood was practically unknown even among the mystics of Judaism, for their very mysticism was grounded in literature, in the occult and recondite interpretation of the phrases, words, letters, events and characters of the book of books - the Bible.

In order that we may speak with authority and with an inner quickening and bring knowledge and insight to those who will turn to us as to trusted teachers and guides, we must be equipped maximally. Whatever else our ministry is called upon to do for our fellowmen, it must certainly instruct the ignorant, *edut adonay neemanah mahkimat peti*. It must bring light to those who cannot see into the heart and the meaning of things, *mizvat adonay, me'irat encyim*. Without knowledge, gathering and expanding, blending the old and the new, and maturing into a wisdom adequate for ministration, we cannot instruct, and without replenishing our own inner light, we cannot enlighten the eyes of others.

We hold our calling high, *beramah*, when our spoken word is carefully weighed and carefully prepared. *Imrat adonay zerufah*, "The word of the Lord is refined of all dross." Words come easily, especially to those who are glib of tongue, but they are not always the responsible words or the helpful words. Words spoken in haste and unpremeditated, and opinions and judgments expressed which are not fully tested and substantiated, or true words spoken in bitterness without love, are unworthy of our high calling, which must depend so much on the word, the dowered, the appropriate, the timely, and the timeless word. Like every other profession, ours, too, has its firm canons of craftsmanship and its exacting and meticulous standards of technique. Isaiah praised God for enabling him to acquire *leshon limudim*, "a cultivated and trained speech," so that he might most effectively encourage with words those who were weary and beaten down.

It is easier to grow careless, dowdy and slovenly in the preaching profession than in any other profession on earth, and we must be warned against it. *En aniyut bimkom ashirut*. There must be no patchwork poverty of form and expression in places where spiritual wealth is to be exhibited. To step into a pulpit and face a congregation of God inadequately prepared in content and form, to dash off a paltry sermon out of a passing headline, to force a puny homily out of a shy and unwilling text, or to set about exciting a congregation into admiration rather than persuading them into a conviction is to speak to men and women who need to understand the message of God.

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belange safah ubelashon aheret, "with contemptuous lips and with a strange and estranging speech."

There is also in evidence a growing tendency to lower the standards and canons of good taste in our synagogue programs and activities matching the prevalent degradation, in order to compete for attention with radio and television and other forms of entertainment. The synagogue cannot, in the long run, maintain itself through vulgarization, and when it does succeed, for a spell, in bringing larger numbers to its halls by some stratagem of unallied and unrefined spectacles or attractions, ought not the words of Isaiah disturb and confound us? "Who hath required this at your hands, to trample My courts?" Certainly, a few precincts ought to remain inviolate sanctuary in our tawdry world of increasing slag and grime, for human fellowship and the upreaching heart and mind of man where the clear atmosphere remains unfailingly one of the beauty of holiness and where everything always speaks of glory, *ua'chekalo kulo omer kabod*.

We hold our calling high, *beramah*, when we underwrite what we say by what we are. *Torat adonay temimah*, "The law of the Lord is perfect." The Rabbis add: *Eymatay hi temimah beshbach shechi yoz'ah mippi tamini*, "When is it perfect? When it comes forth from the mouth of a perfect man," or rather, from the mouth of a man who strives after perfection, since no man is perfect. A man must come into a court of equity with clean hands. Into the courts of the Lord, a Rabbi must come with clean hands and a pure heart.

Very little that we are likely to say during the course of our ministry will have been said for the first time. Even the greatest utterances of men have had their ancestors, and all ethical doctrines have passed through several cycles of existence. The most famous teachers among our people were proud to attribute their teaching to illustrious predecessors and to hang their teachings, as it were, on what they called "the majestic trees" of the past. The fact is that we are dealing with an order of thought wherein basic new ideas are rare and infrequent. Speaking of the remarkable advances in science in our times, a recent writer declared: "The best doctor of a century ago would need a rigorous training to be fit to act as a modern hospital attendant." But assuredly, that is not the case with the best artist, poet, musician, or religious leader of a hundred or a thousand years ago. Progress in our field is not to be measured in terms of discovery, but in terms of application and fulfillment.

Wherein, then, will your originality lie? In the courageous timing of your message, in the inspired and compelling phrasing of that which

men have known all along but have not taken to heart, but, above all, in the way in which your life will surround, pervade and reinforce the utterances of your lips. These will lend distinction to your career.

"Yirat adonay tehorah," "The worship of God is pure." The Rabbis add: "A man may be at home in the entire range of the Law if he is devoid of high moral principles, he has nothing ^m his hands are empty."

Men, as a rule, are quick to detect those who come to them bearing the gifts of learning or charm, or brilliance or salesmanship, but with empty hands and empty hearts. It is the sincere heart which alone provides the resonant music to the spoken word, which, when heard by men, deeply moves and exalts them.

We hold our calling high, beramah, when we speak the truth. "Mishpete adonay emet," "The judgments of the Lord are true." The mishpatim embrace those regulations and ordinances which define man's relations with his fellowmen.

Our prophets and teachers were warned not to be afraid of men, but to speak the word of God fearlessly. "Al tehat mipneyhem," "Do not be afraid of them."

The things, however, to fear most are not the persecutions of men, but the seduction of adulation, the temptation to be in with the right people and to bask in their sunshine, the wish to be unvexed and undisturbed, and not to face that which must, in all conscience, be faced. The Psalmist, whose superb psalm 141 I have been quoting, prays that he be delivered from the persecutions of the wicked and presumptuous men ^m mizadem hasok abdeka but he also prays to be cleansed from his own hidden faults ^m ministarot nakkeni. It is these hidden faults which we do not like to acknowledge in ourselves which destroy us with a subtle inner corruption, so subtle that we are often not even aware of the deadly process of disintegration which is going on in us.

One need not be perennially querulous and cantankerous in the sincere service of God. One can serve God with joy and come before Him and His creatures with singing. When the High Priest, declares the Zohar, was to stand before God in the Sanctuary, he had to enter the holy place with joy, and all things about him were to express joy; for in God's service there is no room for sadness. Serving God and man is a simhak shel mizvah ^m a service of joy. To be m'urob im habriat, cordial and pleasing to men, is no betrayal of conscience. In our vehement days with their violent ways, the spiritual guide serves his sacred calling best when he avoids all harshness of judgment and expression, and when he speaks the word of truth with love and

compassion. Some of our greatest teachers and prophets — Moses, Elijah, Isaiah — were condemned and punished by God because they berated their people too severely, or doubted them too much, because they struck with the rod of their mouth when they should have employed the gentler speech. Our message will be far more welcome and fruitful when it comes "as the dew unto Israel" — and not as a raging storm. Was it not the Law Giver Himself who prayed: "May my doctrine descend as the rain, my speech as the gentle dew." The mood of our faith is not always that of tempest and thunder. It is also a mood of green pastures and still and restful waters.

"*Pekkude adonay yesharim, mesamhe leb*," "The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart." It is to increase the happiness of the world through an acceptance of the precepts of God and to bring joy to the tired hearts of men that we have undertaken our religious ministry, not to vindicate certain ethical abstractions. It is not enough to worship God — one must worship Him, *besimhah uwetub leb*, "with joyfulness and with gladness and goodness of heart."

There is so much tragedy in our world today, and sorrow and anxiety, that the faithful shepherd of men will strive to comfort and reassure men, encourage and strengthen them — rather than increase their consternation. The prophet Ezekiel prophesied against the shepherds of Israel because they had not strengthened the weak nor healed the sick nor bound up the wounded nor brought back the strayed nor sought out the lost, but with rigor and harshness ruled over them. *Ubehazakah redditem alam ubefarek*.

Our careers should be guided always by the three-fold love — *ahabat ha-makom, ahavato ha-adam, ahavat Yisro'el*. Without the love of God, man and Israel in our hearts, we shall be offering through our ministry strange fires upon the high altars of God.

But there are times when even the kindly shepherd must lead with a firm hand. There are times — and they come not infrequently in the life of a Rabbi — when at the behest of his sacred calling and in defense of his own immortal and undishonored soul, he must stand up and bear witness to the truth that is in him regardless; when he must be like "an iron pillar, like brazen walls," against king and princes and priests and people. The sincere and faithful Rabbi will know, beyond any peradventure of doubt, when those challenging and undeniable moments arrive, for the hand of God will be heavy upon him, and he will step forward then with all the power and authority that is in him "to declare unto Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin."

But let us not confound religious truth with political or economic

partisanship, with total identification with one or another system of politics or economics. The role of the religious teacher is not to be the partisan or apologist for any system. No system completely meets the exacting demands of religion. Whether it be capitalism, socialism, or communism, or any of their numerous overlapping forms, there are basic principles of human rights and essential social ideals which are at stake in each, and the religious teacher must at all times remain free to defend these rights and ideals for which no system is adequate guarantee. We have seen in our day that even the rule of peasant and proletariat does not protect society against abuse of power, the exploitation of man, and the defeat of the spiritual promise of human life.

My dear friends: Thirty-seven years ago, on a Sabbath afternoon in June, I was ordained Rabbi at the Hebrew Union College at the hands of my revered teacher, Dr. Kaufmann Kohler. For the valedictory, I took as my text the verse in Joel: zikhnekem halamot yahalomun bohureykem hezyunot yir'u. "Your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions." It was during the first year of the first World War that I was ordained. Much has occurred in our world since that time—wars and revolutions and the most appalling cataclysm in the annals of Jewish history. These have been years of conflict and disaster, but they have also been immense and creative years. Nearly four changeful and eventful decades have elapsed since that time, and were I to choose a text today to enfold my message to you who are about to be ordained as Rabbis, to all of you, and to one of you—I should choose the identical text from the book of the prophet Joel. For od hazon layamim, "There is yet room for vision in the days to come." Od hazon lamo'ed, "There is yet a vision for the appointed time which will not deceive. If it tarry, wait for it. For it will surely come." There is every reason for you to look forward confidently into the future—to see visions of better things to come—to plan and build with all the ardor of your lives bridges into the future athwart impassable gulfs for the eager feet of men, and ladders betwixt heaven and earth. The days to come will surpass all the achievements and the grandeurs of the past.

You are entering not quiet or reposeful times, nor yet stagnant times, but great times of new plowing and sowing. You are entering a profession which will enable you to render great service. In spite of the bafflements and vexations which you will inevitably experience in your careers—for no human life and certainly no worthy human profession can escape them—I feel that your lot has fallen in pleasant places, and that you will have reason to be content with your

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portion in life. *Habalim nafu li ban'imim, af nahalat shafrah alay.*

You are adding your names to the role of a goodly company of men who, through the ages, dedicated their lives to a service which was worthy of their life's dedication. With your endowment and training, you may move forward *beramah*, intrepidly and in high spirits into the tasks and opportunities of the coming years, like "those that go their own gait, erect, stepping with freedom and command, leading, not following." Go forth, dear young colleagues, possessed of yourselves, upbracing your fellowmen, instructing, and learning from those whom you instruct, humble yet fortified in confidence and self-esteem. You will be nobly rewarded in ways in which God rewards His chosen ones. You will find freedom in His service and dignity in walking humbly with Him, and the bread of life will be yours and the wine of the spirit, as you help to build His Kingdom. There will be a goodly harvest, and you will be content.





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THE HONOR OF YOUR PRESENCE

AT THE
ORDINATION SERVICE

ON SATURDAY MORNING, JUNE 7, 1952

AT TEN O'CLOCK

K. K. B'NAI JESHURUN (PLUM STREET TEMPLE)

CINCINNATI, OHIO



THERE IS YET ROOM FOR VISION

Commencement Address by DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER *at the*
HEBREW UNION COLLEGE - JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION
Cincinnati, Ohio · JUNE 7, 1952



SHORTLY BEFORE HIS DEATH, JUDAH HANASI SUMMONED HIS ELDER SON, Gamaliel, who was to succeed him in the patriarchate, and said to him: *Nehog nesiutka beramah*, "Conduct your office with eminence, with greatness. There is a difference of opinion among scholars as to the meaning of the word *beramah*. Some would read *beramim*—"with men of high standing." The Aruch reads it *bedamim*, as "something precious and of great value." The first interpretation appeals to me most. "Conduct your office with greatness."

Judah Hanasi was a very humble man, although he occupied the most exalted office among his people. The Rabbis declared: *Mishemet rabbi, batlah anawah*, "With the death of Rabbi, humility passed away." His advice to his son, therefore, could not be taken to mean: "Be haughty and of a lofty bearing, maintain a domineering attitude towards your fellowmen." It was greatness of another sort that he undoubtedly had in mind: spiritual stateliness, a mood of authority which derives from sure confidence in one's status, one's mandate, one's mission and one's future. He spoke of a high courage with which one, especially a leader, should face all the evil and all the evil-doers of the world, knowing that in the end, goodness will prevail. This quality of greatness was always dear to the heart of our people. They preferred to associate it with their teachers, their leaders and their prophets. As a symbol of his newly-acquired high estate and eminence, it was the practice in Rabbinic times to spread a cloak of gold, *golta dedahabah*, over the ordained at the ceremony of his ordination.

It is of such greatness that I would like to speak to you today, on the day of your ordination; for ours is a time for greatness, and the need is for great men.

Recently, I had occasion to address the American College of Physicians on the subject, "American Leadership in the World Today." I expressed the thought that this age in which we live is a great age, one of the greatest in human history. We are too near our times properly to appraise them. One requires distance in order to see great objects in their proper perspective. We ourselves are too much involved in the turmoil, the fears, and the conflicts of our day to see objectively the amazing new pattern of life which is emerging.

Many people are quick to describe our age as materialistic, as

lacking in idealism, in aim and purpose, and as drifting helplessly to disaster.

A mood of crisis is abroad in our world and there is fear in the hearts of men. Men talk of economic collapse, of a third world war, of an irrepressible conflict between the East and the West which will completely shatter our civilization. There is much violence in our day, all the unleashed mendacities and vituperations of a cold war, *b'ikbot meshika hutzpa gisge*. It is not only in Messianic times that arrogance and brutality increase, but in all times of upheaval and social convulsion.

There are very few people who see this age of ours as a great age. I am persuaded that it is a truly great age. Historic events, great in amplitude and consequence, are coming to pass in our day. I am not thinking at the moment of the new worlds which science is continually disclosing, the new insights into the nature of matter and energy, the new sources of power and wealth, the new methods of production, distribution, transportation and communication. I am not referring to the amazing progress in the medical sciences which has so markedly improved the health of the human race and increased the average length of life, nor to the marvels of engineering and the miracles of construction.

In characterizing our age as great, I am thinking in terms of social progress and welfare, in terms of human advancement and civilization. More is being done in our day for the improvement of the conditions of the common man, for the raising of his standard of living, his health, his education, and for his protection against the disabilities of sickness, unemployment and old age, than in any generation, than in any five generations in the past. Never were more determined efforts being made to bring about a fairer sharing of the wealth that is produced and a better way of life for all.

Never have the submerged races and peoples of the earth risen as they have risen in our day to demand and to achieve, as they have to a large measure achieved, freedom and self-determination. Within the last six years one-fourth of the earth's population—more than five hundred million non-self-governing people—have obtained their political freedom. Imperialism and colonialism are in their death-throes. Backward peoples are pressing forward into the light of a new day, and the exploitation of the dark races of the earth is rapidly drawing to a close.

What we are witnessing in our day, if we have eyes not only to see things, but to see into the heart of things, is not social disintegration, but a radical new reintegration of humanity, a profound change in

the social evolution of man, a change not free, of course, from dangers — for there is no progress without danger — but one of boundless and immeasurable potentialities. We are witnessing one of those sharp, decisive turns in the road of human progress comparable to the catastrophic metamorphoses observable in nature as in the case, for example, of the caterpillar which, at a certain stage, is transformed into the chrysalis and the chrysalis into the butterfly.

I do not wish to overdraw the picture. I am not suggesting that our age is approaching idyllic perfection, or that the millenium is just around the corner.

The important thing to consider is not whether we are on the eve of the millenium, but whether the major trends of our age are in the direction of the hoped-for good society, or away from it. Is our age breaking chains, or not? Is it trying to eradicate poverty and illiteracy and to raise the standard of living of people, regardless of race or color or creed? Is it trying to satisfy the legitimate aspirations of peoples to national freedom and independence? Is it trying to organize the world for peace and for international cooperation? I believe that in all these major trends, our age has given welcome evidence of great determination and of considerable progress. It is moving purposefully in the right direction — the abolition of war, the reduction of poverty, and the elimination of racial inequality. These are the three major trends of our century, and they are the major trends both in the East and the West, in the Communist as well as in the non-Communist world. What is tearing these worlds apart is a difference not of ideology or objective, but of method.

In the solution of the problems of this great, but greatly troubled age of ours, Judaism has a vital role to play. It is the ideals of Judaism which are really at stake in the struggle today, and Judaism's method for human progress. The importance of the individual, his unalienable rights, freedom, democracy, equality, brotherhood, peace — what are they but the offspring of Judaism, reared and nurtured by it. And what method is available to mankind to replace the bitter methods of violence, suppression and terror, which have led to such mounting disasters in our generation, other than the method which Judaism proposed long ago, the method of inner reformation — the inner revolution of compassion and reconciliation — a method which has never been fully tried in the world and which today is being ignored more thoroughly than at any time in human history.

Judaism has the true spirit with which to confront this upreaching age of ours, wild with spiritual confusion; for it has unswerving faith in man, in mankind and in human progress. In this regard Judaism

is quite unique among the religions of mankind — as unique as were its God-concept, its prophets, its synagogue and its prayer worship. With the possible exception of Zoroastrianism, faith in man and in human progress is not present, commandingly, if at all, in Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Christianity or Islam. Indeed, belief in human progress belongs only to a very small portion of the human race. The predominant mood of most historic religions is pessimism. Most religious philosophies from ancient Gnosticism, Stoicism and Cynicism to modern Existentialism are grounded in deep pessimism and disillusionment. Man is hopelessly trapped and cannot escape the predicament of his own existence. He cannot hope to solve the entangled ethical paradoxes of his life. The world is not a good place to live in. It is evil. No real happiness is possible in it. The good society cannot be established on earth. Man is lost in original sin or homeless in an infinite and impersonal universe. He cannot help himself. He needs redemption and a redeemer. His salvation can be achieved, not by personal merit or moral effort, by an act of faith in the vicarious atonement of a saviour and by the grace of God. Man is not free to change himself or his destiny. There is really no purpose in resisting evil. The more one strives to develop his personality, the more enmeshed one becomes in the toils of painful existence. The very will to live is at the root of man's suffering and unhappiness. Man should forego all desire, all ambition, even good ambitions, and await the blessedness of release from the weary and pointless cycle of change into self-disintegration and non-existence. Death is better than life.

It is not doing injustice to the great religions of mankind to suggest that their predominant motif is pessimism, resignation and other-worldliness; nor, in so doing, are we denying the spiritual grandeur or the high elevation attained by some of them. Nor is it to suggest that similar moods are not to be found anywhere in the far-flung domains of Jewish literature wherein, through the ages, ritualists and pietists, rationalists and mystics, traditionalists and reformers, priests and prophets, recorded their views. Numerous sects flourished among our people, especially during the Second Commonwealth. "Israel was not dispersed," declared one of the Rabbis, "until it broke up into twenty-four heterodox sects." Some of them were undoubtedly influenced by the Oriental theosophies prevalent in their environment. Some overemphasized one or another tenet of Judaism, and in so doing, upset the spiritual balance, the unique ethical equipoise which distinguishes our historic faith. In most instances it was a case where sound ideas were followed through relentlessly to their logical conclusion, and, by that very consistency, they became illogical and unwhole-

some, reduced to absurdity. But they never constituted elemental ideas in Judaism, and, in spite of the variety and at times contradictory religious views and opinions recorded in our literature, it is not difficult to discern the outlines of the major trends in Judaism, the key ideas which were occasionally hidden beneath the luxuriant growth and creepers of subsequent commentary and exposition. It is not difficult to discover beneath the restless surface eddies the deep and steady channels of the permanent attitudes which carried on undeflected through the ages.

The great insights of Judaism are easily recognizable in all the stages of its development, and especially its concept of man and of human progress. They derive from a unique religious humanism which sifted and screened the copious beliefs of the Oriental world and rejected all that was extreme and excessive, all that was over-gorged either with sensuality or spirituality, all that denied reality or was blinded by it, all that deified man or degraded him. Judaism was a movement of purification and of equilibrium, achieving for the religious life of man what Greece achieved for his artistic and intellectual life, a sobriety of measure and order which we are wont to call classicism.

In the unique construction of Judaism, man, for example, was indeed conceived as fashioned out of the earth, but in the image of God. He is certainly bound by his physical and mental limitations, but he is boundless in moral aspiration and is possessed of adequate instruments with which to change the face of the earth, the structure of society and his own personal life. Man is finite and yet not helpless. Man is very important in God's scheme of things. There is evil in the world, but it can be overcome through repentance and aspiration, and therein lies the true meaning and adventure of life. Life is good and a gracious gift of God. To love God one need not hate the world. Life should not be feared or contemned or renounced, but sanctified and enjoyed through wholesome living in which the whole of man — body, mind and soul — are fulfilled. Man is exalted through his struggles for the establishment of the Kingdom of universal justice, brotherhood and peace on earth. Evil must be fought and eradicated, and justice must be established in the gate, and man may be sustained and inspired by the convictions that the major processes of history move purposefully toward a definite and benign goal. Man's principal concern should be with life this side of the grave, since "the hidden things belong to God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and our children." These are the all-suffusing ideas of Judaism, its inner fluid and its inner force.

Other religions possess one or more of these ideas. Some adopted them from Judaism; but Judaism has woven them all into a unified and unique pattern, has coordinated them into a dynamic religious philosophy and ethical code which, when applied, powerfully influenced the civilization of mankind in the past and must continue to influence it in the future. That other faiths and groups have accepted some of Judaism's teachings and are working today in the same direction should greatly hearten us. It would be a strange logic, indeed, if such endorsement of our faith by others were to be used to justify the surrender of our own religious and group identity.

It is with high confidence, therefore, *beramah*, that the teachers of Judaism today can confront this exciting, promising, but spiritually turbulent and confused age. They have in their keeping the medicine for the healing of the nations. What they have to say is free from inner contradiction, incontrovertibly relevant and indispensable, sound in program, sound in technique, sound in spirit, and directed to a world which God created not for chaos, but one which He formed for an abiding and pleasant dwelling place for man.

Nor need they fear any more the hostility of science. The physical sciences are no longer battering at the besieged citadel of religion as they did in the 19th and the early 20th centuries. The mechanistic view of the universe has been largely abandoned. Physics is no longer committed to a law of determinism. The philosophy of materialism has suffered severe discredit in our day at the hands of science. If it is not yet an avowed ally of religion, science is certainly no longer its formidable antagonist. Science itself stands face to face with many unsolved and unsolvable mysteries. In science, as well as in religion, one has to operate with basic terms which cannot be defined and with basic propositions which cannot be proved, and in science, too, with every new insight comes a new obscurity.

Thus, within the framework of their acknowledged unknowables, both science and religion are proceeding today uncompetitively to develop on the basis of their experience, insights and intuitions, power and wisdom for the greater glory of man.

The religious teacher has every ground for proclaiming his message to the world today, *beramah*, boldly, with assurance and authority, and without fear that the findings of science may tomorrow shatter the very foundations of his faith.

The religious teacher in Israel may find additional confidence and strengthening in his ministry in the fulfillment in our day of a great historic hope which for so long seemed to be unrealizable, and in the righting of a millennial wrong which seemed to be irreparable.

The hope of national restoration was always an integral part of Judaism. Our faith nurtured it and was, in turn, nurtured by it. Providentially, this long-deferred hope came to fruition in our day. It is a blessed and glorious consummation which our generation was privileged to behold. It should greatly exalt us. Our people always looked forward to the time of its restoration as to a time of greatness, elation and hope. "When the Lord will bring back the captivity of Zion . . . they will say among the nations: the Lord hath done great things with thee: the Lord hath done great things with us. We shall rejoice." What has so unexpectedly transpired in our day should recharge our courage for the greater tasks which lie ahead. For the Messianic hope of our people has been realized only in part. *Galut*—exile—has come to an end and *shi'bud malkuyot*, "The servitude of foreign powers." But in its profounder and universal sense of *aharit ha-yamim*, the establishment of the good society of universal justice, brotherhood and peace on earth, the Messianic hope of our people is, of course, far from having been consummated. The ultimate goal of Judaism reaches beyond all national restorations and sovereignties to the time "when they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, and the earth shall be full of the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea." This Messianic hope Judaism must continue to proclaim. It can do so today more hopefully as a result of what has transpired in Jewish life. In a new, buoyant mood of achievement and vindication, the leaders of Israel may now devote themselves to the totality of Judaism's Messianic message which, in spite of the establishment of the State of Israel, remains unfulfilled. The great work is yet to be done.

The spiritual leader in our day may also be enheartened by the fact that men are turning to religion more and more as to the last sanctuary of man's freedom and dignity.

The religious shrine has from time immemorial served as sanctuary for men who sought escape from persecution or the punitive arm of government. When all else failed, man's last refuge was beside the horns of the altar. Today the church and synagogue are, in an even more vital sense, man's last refuge from the all-demanding, all-coordinating and all-subjugating state.

Man is being made small in our day by the very systems which undertake to serve and exalt him. His rights have been curtailed by the very governments which avowedly seek to extend them. He has been denied his freedom on the plea of greater freedoms to come. It is a passing phase, I am sure, a by-product of wrong methods which are being employed to achieve good results. But in the meantime,

man is being beaten down into littleness and rightlessness. Every precinct of his life is being invaded. Where is escape? Where shall the dove find resting place while the flood waters cover the earth, except in the ark of faith? Where shall man find shelter for his self-esteem and dignity, sanctuary from the relentless collective rhythms of his world? Where but in the courts of the living God! where man is never subordinated except to God, where he is thought of as "a little lower than the angels" — where he is held inviolate in his spiritual dignity as a child of God. "How lovely is thy dwelling-place, O Lord of hosts! My spirit longs and pines for the courts of the Lord." "For in Thee doth my soul take refuge, and in the shadow of Thy wings will I take refuge until the calamities be over-past."

It is not so much for peace of mind that men and women are turning to religion today but to escape the frightening attrition of their spiritual independence and to find sanctuary from the violent forces which threaten to liquidate their inherent human dignity and to submerge and nullify them as sovereign personalities.

To reassure them of their inalienable human worth and greatness, the spiritual teacher comes to men today with the comforting message of his faith: *wekabod wehadar te'atrehu*, "God crowns man with glory and honor." It is a welcome message, indeed! And men hunger for it. It appeals to the greatness in man, to his full status and stature, and by so doing, it helps to make him great as well as to demand greatly of himself.

You are being ordained into the Rabbinate in times dangerous and convulsive, and yet, into great and prophetic times; and I would urge you to strive to match your hour. Strive for greatness! How?

Have a high regard for your calling! It is a great calling. Give to it unreservedly your enfranchised minds and your understanding hearts. Honor it with your full substance and let your substance grow with increasing knowledge garnered through the advancing years and with the experiences which life will engraven in your hearts. How much of the basic vocabulary of our faith stems from the root terms of learning and teaching: Torah, Talmud, Mishna, Gemara, Midrash, Tana, Amora, Sabora, Talmid Chacham! You, too, will be teachers — teachers of the good book, the good life, the good society. Our profession is not necessarily one of the specialized scholar, but most assuredly it is one of the faithful and avid student and learner.

Throughout our lives we must be men of the Book and men of books. Religious mystics of other faiths at times came to despise learning and books. "Books!" exclaimed the famous Sufi of Islam, Abu Sa'id, "Ye are excellent guides, but it is absurd to trouble about a

guide after the goal has been reached." He also said, "The first step in Sufism is the breaking of ink-pots and the tearing up of books and the forgetting of knowledge."

This mood was practically unknown even among the mystics of Judaism, for their very mysticism was grounded in literature, in the occult and recondite interpretation of the phrases, words, letters, events and characters of the book of books — the Bible.

In order that we may speak with authority and with an inner quickening and bring knowledge and insight to those who will turn to us as to trusted teachers and guides, we must be equipped maximally. Whatever else our ministry is called upon to do for our fellowmen, it must certainly instruct the ignorant, *edut adonay neemanah mahkimat peti*. It must bring light to those who cannot see into the heart and the meaning of things, *mizwat adonay, me'irat enayim*. Without knowledge, gathering and expanding, blending the old and the new, and maturing into a wisdom adequate for ministration, we cannot instruct, and without replenishing our own inner light, we cannot enlighten the eyes of others.

We hold our calling high, *beramah*, when our spoken word is carefully weighed and carefully prepared. *Imrat adonay zerufah*, "The word of the Lord is refined of all dross." Words come easily, especially to those who are glib of tongue, but they are not always the responsible words or the helpful words. Words spoken in haste and unpremeditated, and opinions and judgments expressed which are not fully tested and substantiated, or true words spoken in bitterness without love, are unworthy of our high calling which must depend so much on the word, the dowered, the appropriate, the timely, and the timeless word. Like every other profession, ours, too, has its firm canons of craftsmanship and its exacting and meticulous standards of technique. Isaiah praised God for enabling him to acquire *leshon limmudim*, "a cultivated and trained speech, so that he might most effectively encourage with words those who were weary and beaten down.

It is easier to grow careless, dowdy and slovenly in the preaching profession than in any other profession on earth, and we must be warned against it. *En aniyut binkom ashirut*. There must be no patchwork poverty of form and expression in places where spiritual wealth is to be exhibited. To step into a pulpit and face a congregation of God inadequately prepared in content and form, to dash off a paltry sermon out of a passing headline, to force a puny homily out of a shy and unwilling text, or to set about exciting a congregation into admiration rather than persuading them into a conviction is to speak to men and women who need to understand the message of God,

belaage safah ubelashon aheret, "with contemptuous lips and with a strange and estranging speech."

There is also in evidence a growing tendency to lower the standards and canons of good taste in our synagogue programs and activities matching the prevalent degradation, in order to compete for attention with radio and television and other forms of entertainment. The synagogue cannot, in the long run, maintain itself through vulgarization, and when it does succeed, for a spell, in bringing larger numbers to its halls by some stratagem of unallied and unrefined spectacles or attractions, ought not the words of Isaiah disturb and confound us? "Who hath required this at your hands, to trample My courts?" Certainly, a few precincts ought to remain inviolate sanctuary in our tawdry world of increasing slag and grime, for human fellowship and the upreaching heart and mind of man where the clear atmosphere remains unfailingly one of the beauty of holiness and where everything always speaks of glory, *uwehehalo kulo omer kabod*.

We hold our calling high, *beramah*, when we underwrite what we say by what we are. *Torat adonay temimah*, "The law of the Lord is perfect." The Rabbis add: *Eymatay hi temimah besha'ah shehi yoz'ah mippi tamim*, "When is it perfect? When it comes forth from the mouth of a perfect man," or rather, from the mouth of a man who strives after perfection, since no man is perfect. A man must come into a court of equity with clean hands. Into the courts of the Lord, a Rabbi must come with clean hands and a pure heart.

Very little that we are likely to say during the course of our ministry will have been said for the first time. Even the greatest utterances of men have had their ancestors, and all ethical doctrines have passed through several cycles of existence. The most famous teachers among our people were proud to attribute their teaching to illustrious predecessors and to hang their teachings, as it were, on what they called "the majestic trees" of the past. The fact is that we are dealing with an order of thought wherein basic new ideas are rare and infrequent. Speaking of the remarkable advances in science in our times, a recent writer declared: "The best doctor of a century ago would need a rigorous training to be fit to act as a modern hospital attendant." But assuredly, that is not the case with the best artist, poet, musician, or religious leader of a hundred or a thousand years ago. Progress in our field is not to be measured in terms of discovery, but in terms of application and fulfillment.

Wherein, then, will your originality lie? In the courageous timing of your message, in the inspired and compelling phrasing of that which

men have known all along but have not taken to heart, but, above all, in the way in which your life will surround, pervade and reenforce the utterances of your lips. These will lend distinction to your career. *Yirat adonay tehorah*, "The worship of God is pure." The Rabbis add: "A man may be at home in the entire range of the Law—if he is devoid of high moral principles, he has nothing—his hands are empty."

Men, as a rule, are quick to detect those who come to them bearing the gifts of learning or charm, or brilliance or salesmanship, but with empty hands and empty hearts. It is the sincere heart which alone provides the resonant music to the spoken word, which, when heard by men, deeply moves and exalts them.

We hold our calling high, *beramah*, when we speak the truth. *Mishpete adonay emet*, "The judgments of the Lord are true." The *mishpatim* embrace those regulations and ordinances which define man's relations with his fellowmen.

Our prophets and teachers were warned not to be afraid of men, but to speak the word of God fearlessly. *Al tehat mipneyhem*, "Do not be afraid of them."

The things, however, to fear most are not the persecutions of men, but the seduction of adulation, the temptation to be in with the right people and to bask in their sunshine, the wish to be unvexed and undisturbed, and not to face that which must, in all conscience, be faced. The Psalmist, whose superb psalm 19 I have been quoting, prays that he be delivered from the persecutions of the wicked and presumptuous men—*mizedem hasok abdeka*—but he also prays to be cleansed from his own hidden faults—*ministarot nakkeni*. It is these hidden faults which we do not like to acknowledge in ourselves which destroy us with a subtle inner corruption, so subtle that we are often not even aware of the deadly process of disintegration which is going on in us.

One need not be perennially querulous and cantankerous in the sincere service of God. One can serve God with joy and come before Him and His creatures with singing. When the High Priest, declares the Zohar, was to stand before God in the Sanctuary, he had to enter the holy place with joy, and all things about him were to express joy; for in God's service there is no room for sadness. Serving God and man is a *simhah shel mizwah*—a service of joy. To be *m'urob im habriat*, cordial and pleasing to men, is no betrayal of conscience. In our vehement days with their violent ways, the spiritual guide serves his sacred calling best when he avoids all harshness of judgment and expression, and when he speaks the word of truth with love and

compassion. Some of our greatest teachers and prophets — Moses, Elijah, Isaiah — were condemned and punished by God because they berated their people too severely, or doubted them too much, because they struck with the rod of their mouth when they should have employed the gentler speech. Our message will be far more welcome and fruitful when it comes "as the dew unto Israel" — and not as a raging storm. Was it not the Law Giver Himself who prayed: "May my doctrine descend as the rain, my speech as the gentle dew." The mood of our faith is not always that of tempest and thunder. It is also a mood of green pastures and still and restful waters.

Pekkude adonay yesharim, mesamhe leb. "The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart." It is to increase the happiness of the world through an acceptance of the precepts of God and to bring joy to the tired hearts of men that we have undertaken our religious ministry, not to vindicate certain ethical abstractions. It is not enough to worship God — one must worship Him, *besimḥah uwetub leb*, "with joyfulness and with gladness and goodness of heart."

There is so much tragedy in our world today, and sorrow and anxiety, that the faithful shepherd of men will strive to comfort and reassure men, encourage and strengthen them — rather than increase their consternation. The prophet Ezekiel prophesied against the shepherds of Israel because they had not strengthened the weak nor healed the sick nor bound up the wounded nor brought back the strayed nor sought out the lost, but with rigor and harshness ruled over them. *Ubeḥazakah reditem otam ubefarek.*

Our careers should be guided always by the three-fold love — *ahabat ha-makom, ahabato ha-adam, ahabat Yisro'el*. Without the love of God, man and Israel in our hearts, we shall be offering through our ministry strange fires upon the high altars of God.

But there are times when even the kindly shepherd must lead with a firm hand. There are times — and they come not infrequently in the life of a Rabbi — when at the behest of his sacred calling and in defense of his own immortal and undishonored soul, he must stand up and bear witness to the truth that is in him regardless; when he must be like "an iron pillar, like brazen walls," against king and princes and priests and people. The sincere and faithful Rabbi will know, beyond any peradventure of doubt, when those challenging and undeniable moments arrive, for the hand of God will be heavy upon him, and he will step forward then with all the power and authority that is in him "to declare unto Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin."

But let us not confound religious truth with political or economic

partisanship, with total identification with one or another system of politics or economics. The role of the religious teacher is not to be the partisan or apologist for any system. No system completely meets the exacting demands of religion. Whether it be capitalism, socialism or communism, or any of their numerous overlapping forms, there are basic principles of human rights and essential social ideals which are at stake in each, and the religious teacher must at all times remain free to defend these rights and ideals for which no system is adequate guarantee. We have seen in our day that even the rule of peasant and proletariat does not protect society against abuse of power, the exploitation of man, and the defeat of the spiritual promise of human life.

My dear friends: Thirty-seven years ago, on a Sabbath afternoon in June, I was ordained Rabbi at the Hebrew Union College at the hands of my revered teacher, Dr. Kaufmann Kohler. For the valedictory, I took as my text the verse in Joel: *ziknekem hālamot yahalomun bohureykem hezyunot yir'u*. "Your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions." It was during the first year of the first World War that I was ordained. Much has occurred in our world since that time—wars and revolutions and the most appalling cataclysm in the annals of Jewish history. These have been years of conflict and disaster, but they have also been immense and creative years. Nearly four changeful and eventful decades have elapsed since that time, and were I to choose a text today to enfold my message to you who are about to be ordained as Rabbis—to all of you, and to one of you—I should choose the identical text from the book of the prophet Joel. For *od hazon layamim*, "There is yet room for vision in the days to come." *Od hazon lamo'ed*, "There is yet a vision for the appointed time which will not deceive. If it tarry, wait for it. For it will surely come." There is every reason for you to look forward confidently into the future—to see visions of better things to come—to plan and build with all the ardor of your lives bridges into the future athwart impassable gulfs for the eager feet of men, and ladders betwixt heaven and earth. The days to come will surpass all the achievements and the grandeurs of the past.

You are entering, not quiet or reposeful times, nor yet stagnant times, but great times of new plowing and sowing. You are entering a profession which will enable you to render great service. In spite of the bafflements and vexations which you will inevitably experience in your careers—for no human life and certainly no worthy human profession can escape them—I feel that your lot has fallen in pleasant places, and that you will have reason to be content with your

portion in life. *Habalim naflu li ban'imim, af nahalat shafrah alay.*

You are adding your names to the role of a goodly company of men who, through the ages, dedicated their lives to a service which was worthy of their life's dedication. With your endowment and training, you may move forward *beramah*, intrepidly and in high spirits into the tasks and opportunities of the coming years, like "those that go their own gait, erect, stepping with freedom and command, leading, not following." Go forth, dear young colleagues, possessed of yourselves, upbracing your fellowmen, instructing, and learning from those whom you instruct, humble yet fortified in confidence and self-esteem. You will be nobly rewarded in ways in which God rewards His chosen ones. You will find freedom in His service and dignity in walking humbly with Him, and the bread of life will be yours and the wine of the spirit, as you help to build His Kingdom. There will be a goodly harvest, and you will be content.

